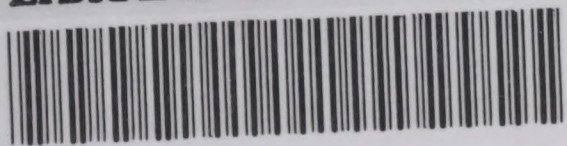


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MELVIN MACE

A TALE OF
A ZINC MINE

HARVEY C. LOWRANCE



HARVEY C. LOWRANCE

Author

MELVIN MACE

A STORY OF

182
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A ZINC MINE

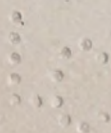
BY

HARVEY C. LOWRANCE

(Pronounced Lo'RANCE)

KANSAS CITY AND JOPLIN,

MISSOURI



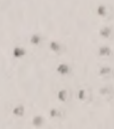
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no 1,

To the many who have located valuable minerals, and either gave them away or were defrauded out of their discoveries by bad laws or bad people, this little romance is sympathetically dedicated, hoping it may, in some way, become "rivers of water in dry places, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

THE AUTHOR.

Kansas City and Joplin, Mo.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Harvey C. Lowrance.....	4	✓
Melvin Mace.....	25	✓
The Chipmunk Mine.....	83	✓
Heck Bruce	129	✓
Lewis Cass Howe.....	155	✓
Quita	187	✓

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CHAPTER I.

I think it was nineteen years ago the middle of this next June, and dangerously near the ominous thirteenth day of the month, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, that a mover with a two-horse wagon drove slowly up a sloping street into the zinc metropolis of southwest Missouri.

There was nothing about the outfit to excite interest or attract attention; the man stopped near a busy corner, got out of the wagon, walked to a young man who stood near where the curbstone now is, and inquired for a place to camp in the suburbs.

The stranger looked fagged, but exhibited a bearing and dignity that seemed to denote sense, breeding, experience, education, and many other qualities not possessed by all overland emigrants.

Quite a rote of questions and answers were passed between them. The resident was a young attorney, who had lived in the town about a year; his cases had been "angel visits," as he put it; he had spent much of the year in familiarizing himself with the adjacent country, and hence was well stocked with knowledge about the surroundings, and easily informed the newcomer of a desirable place on the creek, a mile or so north, where movers usually stopped—a general rendezvous for horse-traders, fortune-tellers, and the like.

Just before departing the newcomer said to the lawyer: "My name is Melvin Mace; I want to thank you for your kindness and express the hope that we may meet again."

The young man handed him his card, which read: "Lewis C. Howe, Attorney at Law." Mace took the card, deposited it between the sweat-stained backs of a small daybook, placing

it in his pocket, and remarked: "I'll keep this, although I also keep a comfortable distance from court-houses. The future holds so many things, however, your services as a lawyer might be among them." So saying, he bade the lawyer good day, and turned the horses in the direction of the camping-place.

As the outfit slowly went away their appearance perhaps attracted no one's notice but Howe's. He watched them earnestly; the bay horses, wagon, sideboards, sheet, feed-box, fly-nets, high spring seat with red blanket for cushion, and the closely built, intelligent-faced driver, all seemed to be photographed on his mind, and formed a negative on which he might spend months retouching and then find something more to develop.

He went to his office, sat near a little front window, took a professional chew of tobacco, and proceeded to champ it as though thoroughly preparing it for digestion, never relaxing his dental mill until the grist was an unrecognizable pulp. He continued to think about the man in the wagon, questioned and cross-examined himself about him. "Was the man alone?" "How far had he come?" "Was he married?" "Did he have one, two, or five children at home, with some patient and self-sacrificing mother?" "What is his occupation?" "Where is he going from this place? and when?" These unanswered questions passed through his mind with rapid-fire quickness. He sat as one in real pantomime. Something said a lesson had been assigned him; where was he to recite, and what grade on a scale of one hundred would he make? Little did he dream he had that day laid the ground-work of a structure whose walls, doors, and fences would ever keep the hungry wolf securely warded away.

Time passed and sultry June ticked her last little second; July was ushered in as usual with her quota of rockets, Roman candles, and the regular introductory of: "My countrymen,

ladies and gentlemen: It is with the greatest misgivings, distrust, and lack of confidence that I attempt to address you on this, the anniversary of our most noble and glorious——”

Howe's law business lingered in the vicinity of zero, despite the soaring mercury in his office thermometer. His local competitors for legal distinction were stiff, distant, and unfriendly.

CHAPTER II.

"Hello there! hello!"

"Who's ahead—the flesh, the devil, or filthy lucre?"

These words, like slag from a blast furnace, came through Howe's office door early one Sunday morning in July, and were spoken by a young man something like twenty years of age, one of Howe's acquaintances, who clerked in a store across the street from his office. His name was White. The two had formed a liking for each other in the months past.

Howe laid by the little Sunday morning paper that had been engrossing his attention and gave White a staring look with the remark: "What part of your triple-headed question do you want me to answer first?"

"Makes no difference."

"Well then," said Howe, "my field officers inform me that the flesh and the devil have agreed to suspend hostilities until cooler weather; as to the filthy lucre part of your interrogatory, I'm like the little country boy who went to a neighbor's house one cold day and, after leisurely warming himself, told them that his mother was burned. The neighbor lady asked him if she was burned much. Stammering and hesitating for three or four minutes, he finally replied. 'Much?' said he; 'she's burned square up, if you call that much.' Filthy lucre I haven't any; I reckon this hot weather has burned it square up."

"Bad enough," continued White, "but might be worse. I've every cent of my last week's salary, and feel puffed up on account of its possession. Don't know but that purse pride is as bad as bankruptcy. Let's go over to the 'J. S.' livery stable and get one of their two-fifteen high-hookers and take a drive. Nothing better could be prescribed; it ought to be a criminal offense to stay housed up a Sunday like this."

Howe's system responded to White's offer with the spontaneous alacrity that it would had he just received a fat retainer in a divorce case with a ruby-lipped and lodestone-eyed brunette for a client.

The horse and buggy were hired for the day—a little tick-bitten, blaze-faced sorrel, the meanest color for man or beast. After luncheon had been gathered together, consisting of what things Howe could forage at his boarding-house on Sunday morning, which he denominated bookkeeper's food—"balance brought forward," or "yesterday's footings"—the two were off for their outing.

CHAPTER III.

The firmament never appeared more unclouded; it seemed to have deposited its moisture in some far-away ocean, there to await the mandate to come forth in microscopic minuteness, striking the frigid strata of earth garret, to precipitate and slake the thirst of Nature's dependent throat.

Regretfully do we note that on this lovely morning our rambles were forbidden the sight of the babbling brooks, of lowing herds and fleecy flocks; they passed no little stone churches, and few, if any, old farm-houses with "meadows wide" and old oaken buckets dangling from sweeps above rock-walled wells just off the vine-covered porches. No hollyhocks inside the garden pickets deigned to rear their podded stalks and purple leaves to relieve the weary travelers' yearning for variegation. Such scenes of spectacular grandeur were not on exhibition.

No spotted-winged mocking bird or speckled-breasted jay called his mate from the topmost limbs of the hedge or wild cherry, and no meadow lark, balanced on wire fence's top strand or telegraph line, taunted them with the familiar old chestnut, "Laziness will kill you." Mr. Quail, with his trumpet-like but impassioned voice, saying, "Bob White, is peas ripe? No, not quite," was also conspicuous for his absence. No milkmaid "fair with golden hair" was seen driving old Spot and old Boss to the pasture gate, leering the while, and wondering who, why, and where? And there were no Berkshire pigs imbibing the lacteal fluid from their flop-eared mother's bosom to nourish their little stomachs, embryonic and unbot-tled pepsin, to be used at no distant day to soothe the stomachs of the children of other hogs, who, though their ears were not

so floppy, were still to exhibit all the traits and habits known to swinedom.

All this and these the outers had to forego, and view the scenery on the program. It is not our purpose to here relate how they longed for such things, what a relief an old moss-canopied water-wheel below the mill would have been, or how refreshing and comforting if some Maud Muller had handed them her little tin cup brim - full of *aqua pura*, not from a bacteria-lined and microbe-swarming water-barrel, but from one of Nature's gushers that flowed over the sward and across the highway.

But, instead of the longed-for, they were compelled to see what to both of them—and especially to White—had long since worn from the familiar to the extremely common. To those unacquainted with mining-camps and their surroundings too much descriptive usually mystifies. White had been reared from infancy in the zinc-mining district, had been among mines and miners for years. Not one place had been seen but was a many-times-told tale to him; the shafts, derricks, machinery, pumps, ore-bins, and waste rock, all were familiarity personified.

At last noon came—slowly, but surely. The sun had reached his meridian height. Our tourists, after feeding the horse in the back part of the buggy, began to explore the secret archives of the dinner-basket. They found some canned beef, bread buttered, a bottle of pickles, some boiled eggs and cookies, all of which disappeared to the jig time of "Now you see it and now you don't."

After dinner, which was appreciated with the keenest relish, their talk continued like this:

"White, what do you think about yourself from the viewpoint of matrimony? Do you ever think seriously of such a thing?"

"No," said he, "I've long since made up my mind that I've no right to set up a brace game, sell tickets for a good price and compel some innocent girl to draw a blank, which, of course, she'd be absolutely certain to do. I tell you candidly, Howe, this marriage question is the most stupendous proposition that does now or ever did confront the human race, and there are more folks married now than have plenty of cold grub in the cupboard.

"We don't have to go to ancient history or the densely populated centers of the Old World for examples. Only look at my friend Long, who got killed in the mines a week or so ago—went back on a shot—head blown off—leaves a wife and three little girls, all as helpless as a mountain trout in Sahara's desert, and, what's worse, there is going to be another baby."

"Too bad, too bad," said Howe.

"Yes, sir; and I heard only yesterday his partners were going to forfeit his interest in the mine unless the poor woman will pay twelve dollars per week—one-fourth of the expenses—or furnish a man to work in his place. She can't commence to do either one, for she'll have a desperate struggle to make bread and money. Let me tell you," White continued, "do you know that I believe she'd be amply justified in pronouncing life a failure, hoist the white flag, and give up the fight?"

"I don't know about that," Howe rejoined; "maybe she'll make a scratch and, by some good luck, win out after all."

"It will be a scratch if she does; she's got about as many chances to win as a sheep has to kill a butcher."

"A sheep might kill a butcher—after its own death," said Howe; "you know a gorge of mutton is hard to digest."

"True enough, Howe; but Long's widow and orphan children are not going to suffer from indigestion."

"I hope not; that's almost as bad as hunger; I've tried both. Be that as it may, while it's in order, I have a sug-

gestion to make: let's you and I go to work to-morrow morning and do all we can to prevent the partners from defrauding her out of that property. I've heard about it before; it's well worth fifteen or twenty thousand dollars."

"Agreed," White responded; "there's nothing honorable that I will not do to protect her and the little ones. You must be the moving spirit in the premises, however, but I'll execute your orders, perform every duty, and discharge all obligations that devolve in any way on me."

"Now that's the way to talk, old boy. If we can't occupy a pulpit on Sunday at a large salary made up in parts of widows' mites, we can at least contribute our own 'might' to the protection of this widow and the hereditary rights of her fatherless babes."

"That's a good resolution and timely suggestion," White added, tightening the lines while they crossed a small ravine.

From matrimony, domestic infelicity, widowhood and orphanage, their conversation drifted to other topics, mostly of a local nature, until time for them to begin their return toward home. When within about one mile of town, their horse began to develop qualities of alarming ugliness; the least noise would terrify him, the clatter of his own hoofs in the dust increased his dismay. At last, overcome with fear, he passed to a go—went—gone, and was soon redeeming the pledges and fulfilling the promises made in the morning by his owner.

Howe quickly grabbed the lines from his friend, and with all his strength sat back on them, one of which broke from the bit, and the continuous pull on the other one reined the unmanageable steed to the side of the road, and before he could be checked up or stopped he ran into and through a mover's camp and against a fence that was "horse high and cow strong."

The young men alighted and hastened back to the camp to ascertain and repair the damages, if any, that had been done.

The first and only person that attracted their attention was a man sitting on a camp-stool near a covered wagon; he was of medium size, about five feet and seven inches in height, and would weigh probably one hundred and sixty pounds. Before they had time to commence or arrange to make reparation for damages, the stranger greeted them:

"Hello, Howe! you took the side-track here without a signal."

"True enough," said Howe; "and I think we're side-tracked at your station with a dead engine."

"You may be able to pull in with one arm," said the stranger.

"I don't know about arms," but I know if we pull in at all, it will be with one line. We came back to pay for breaking your utensils."

Diligent search about the camp only showed that one frying-pan had been mashed by the high-stepper's hoofs and a second and third dig taken at it by two of the buggy wheels. From its junk-like appearance, it was pronounced unfit for the purposes for which it was intended, and was appraised at twenty-five cents, which was cheerfully paid without quibble.

"Stranger," said Howe, "you are easy to trade with on Sunday."

"Yes, or any other day," he replied, "for I always adhere closely to the old maxim, 'Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day,' and we might add that other maxim, equally forceful, 'The better the day the better the deed.'"

"But how came you to call my name? I confess you have the best of me."

"I called your name," the mover replied, "because I know you—have met you and am acquainted with you. That ought to be reason enough. Your name is Lewis C. Howe, and you are a lawyer—the first and last man I ever met in these parts,

and besides, I've a tar-bucket memory; 'most all things that hit my head stay there. Many people remember faces only; I recollect both names and faces; I make it a specialty not to forget one's name; I never wink at any person—was punished for that when a child; I give them both barrels (meaning both eyes). If you will look at one with both eyes square in the face while he is telling you his name, and keep your wits, you'll have no trouble in remembering both. A man who will not look at you in the face is planning warfare on one of two things—*you or your purse*. One who looks at your feet is not the best citizen and will bear plenty of scrutiny, but a person who filters and oozes his vision out of one little squint eye at a time—watch him—watch him; he'd throw rocks at a funeral, and push a lame dog into the creek."

"Whoa there, Whale!" said the mover, breaking the conversation with the men and addressing one of his horses that had his foot over the hitch-rein. "I call him Whale because he swallows so much."

"What do you call *him*?" said Howe, pointing to his other animal.

"Him's a her," said he, "and I call her Delilah, because she gnawed Whale's mane off, and besides, she's the heifer he plowed with."

"Mister," said Howe, "you appear to be a Biblicist. Do you read the Bible much?"

"I did some in the early morning of life—like many other farmers' sons, I hadn't much else to read; after the sun got up a little, I began to think I could see as well as the ancients, especially with modern telescopic assistance."

"Yes, but can you write as well as they?" White inquired.

"No," said the mover, with falling voice; "if I could, I would hesitate about doing it, for Moses left a written account

of his own death and burial. But there is one sentence in that book I do believe with all my mind."

White asked him which one it was.

" 'I said in my haste, All men are liars,' " he replied.

"That ought to make a man feel proud of his mother and sisters, wife and daughters too, if he's got them," said Howe.

"It should indeed, by gum!" said the mover; "but, you see, David was quite a favorite among the ladies, and wanted to give them all the best of it, and moreover, he was in haste that day when he said it, and, as you lawyers say, that was his 'examination in chief.' Perhaps, if he'd been subjected to a sharp, critical, strict, keen, and vigorous cross-examination, he might have admitted that the word *all* was intended in that case to mean an overwhelming majority."

"You may be right," said Howe; "but the case has been closed so long that we can't file a motion for a new trial, nor an affidavit for an appeal."

"Maybe not," said the mover; "but we can do the next best thing, we can slip the handcuffs and sheriff, then take a change of venue to Arizona."

"Some have done so, and they are not our worst people either," Howe rejoined. "But it's late, and White and I must be getting to town. We'll be compelled to make a 'continued in our next' out of this call. But one word before we leave, mister: How are you getting along? Are the good people using you badly?"

"Howe, don't call me 'mister.' Webster put the two words, *mister* and *misterm*, next to each other in his dictionary, knowing they both mean the same. Just call me Mace, or Melvin Mace. Answering your question, I'll say that I've been hunting a job; you know that is something that won't hunt you."

"Have you found one?"

"Yes—no—I found it and I didn't find it. I thought I had, but when I went after it in earnest, like the will-o'-the-wisp that hard labor is, it ran from me."

"Did you catch it?"

"No; I think some trickster bought the rider and threw the race. It was like this: An old skinflint employed me to haul stone, and he wanted me to kill Whale and Delilah the first load. I wouldn't stand for it. I regard a horse-murderer the same as I do one who in the full possession of his reason kills a human being with malice, premeditatedly."

"Mace, you are a legal definer. Did you ever study law?"

"No, sir; I don't have to study it; I've helped make it," he replied. "I am like a lad I knew down east; the school-ma'am asked him who made the earth, and he answered that he didn't know; she boxed his ears and said, 'You do know'; and through his sobs he replied, 'Yes, I do know—I made it—but if you'll not punish me any more, I'll never make another one like it.' "

"Philosophy of self-defense," said Howe; "by gum! he was righter than right. But say, Mace, were you ever in the mining business?"

"Yes; I'm in it now," he replied, "min'ing my own business."

"But I mean, did you ever dig, delve, and search down in the vaults of the earth for valuable substances, such as silver, gold, iron, lead, and the like?"

"Indeed I have," Mace replied; "I'm just from the iron-mines in southeast Missouri, where I've been working for near seven years, and before going there, I worked in the coal-mines in Illinois, and I've prospected for copper in the Northwest. Mine? I should say I have. Do you see this watch?" He held up a beautiful gold watch that was fastened to his clothing by a buckskin thong. "That was presented to me by a coal

company in Illinois—a memento—and for services I rendered them while I was their foreman. I persuaded my men to refrain from taking part in a strike, and the mine-owners gave me this. She's a world-wide beauty and very companionable. It also has a name—Miss Cookie. You see, one night I lost it (I was slightly under the influence of 'shepherd's delight,' a Peoria product); my boarding-house-keeper, a Miss Cain, found it and gave it to me next morning. Miss Cain made such good cookies that the boarders called her 'Miss Cookie,' so I call my timepiece for her. Yes, siree, I've mined."

Howe then related all about the death of Long, his interest in a certain zinc-mine, the destitute condition of his widow and children, adding that it was his opinion from what he'd learned from White and other trustworthy sources that it was good property, and that Mrs. Long would gladly let someone have an interest (probably one-half) if by so doing she could prevent forfeiture and save something for herself and luckless little ones.

The matter was discussed in detail. It was agreed that Mace should come to Howe's office the next morning early, and the two would see Mrs. Long, verify the current reports concerning the mine, if possible, and maybe effect a bargain with her that would be profitable to all concerned.



MELVIN MACE

CHAPTER IV.

Nothing in the galaxy of things terrestrial is subject to so many and diversified changes and unlooked-for alterations as the weather. Eight o'clock Monday morning saw Mace sitting in his covered wagon near the foot of the stair over which swung an unassuming little metallic sign, "L. C. HOWE, Attorney." Dark, lowering clouds surmounted the landscape, and on their somber roofs, with pirate-like gluttony, devoured all falling sunbeams, while their murky contents refused the earth the conciliating influence of a summer shower. Howe soon arrived from his boarding-house, and the two set out at once to the home of Mrs. Long and the mines. The little one-room box house was found after diligent search, about two miles from the main part of the town, and was denominated, in the mining vernacular of that region, a "shack." About ten bushels of coal and a water-barrel constituted the only stage-settings in what might have been termed the unfenced front yard.

Both men approached the house in death-like silence. One of them tapped gently on the front door once, twice, and three times—before hearing a response from within. Then came the feeble and forceless but withal the most melodious sentence that ever trickled from human lips, "Come in."

Mace pushed the little door back and both entered. All the family were at home—the widow, three little girls, above referred to, and another wee-faced posthumous little one, a boy, aged three days and some odd hours. He lay nestled on the bed with his mother. In describing this branch of the Long family tree, it will be best to recur back to the buried father and husband. He was a born gentleman of Southern par-

entage; had been educated and well trained in boyhood; was polite, easy, and graceful in manners and behavior; had taught school, kept books, sold goods, and followed such other occupations before coming to this part of the country. Finally, when the gray hairs began to multiply very rapidly, he married the polished little sick woman who then lay before them, and whose winsome but pinched features rekindled within their memories the most sublime veneration for motherhood. After the marriage, he and the little wife, like many others have done and thousands more will do, drifted "out West," urged on by the irrepressible force of that human current whose general direction and destination has ever been toward the setting sun. And here in this mining district, as with newness of life, and with vigor reinforced by the activity of his neighbors, he had cast his anchor for the last time to brave the tempestuous sea of modern industrialism.

The little girls, in the order of their ages, were: Quita, eleven; Faula, seven; and Luling, four; and they had already achieved a little local reputation on account of their immaculate beauty and their pleasing little names. They were truly models of exquisite grace and love. Each seemed a living, breathing, and animate pattern of worshipful incipient womanhood. Quita and Faula had large brown eyes of the dreamy type; Luling's were a faultless copy of the azure sky—transparent as a mountain brook, they reflected from her little soul a disposition and temperament as mild and amiable as they were comely. Luling was a duplicate of her mother in all things; her voice was keyed in the same tone, her gestures were almost an exact imitation, and one would recognize at a glance the similarity of their natures. While they all showed unmistakable signs and tokens, almost proofs, of absolute perfection, Quita was pre-eminently the most winsome child of her years that Mace and the lawyer had ever met. Her

answers and the ladylike way she conversed with them, assuming for the time being (on account of her age) the position of the pronounced and undisputed head of the family, were beyond cavil exhibitions of superior childhood, the like of which both afterward avowed they had never before seen.

"Do I have the honor of addressing Mrs. Long?" said Mace, as he lifted his hat and advanced a step toward the bed.

"Yes, sir; and who may be you, who have condescended to call on me and my little brood in this wretched hovel?"

"My name is Melvin Mace, and the young man with me is Howe—Lewis C. Howe, a lawyer who lives up town. He is a stranger to me," said Mace in a subdued tone of voice while his friend was talking to the little girls, "but my impression is that he's upright. Let me assure you, lady, that our mission is not one of mischief, and that we design no hurt or harm to you or yours." He then told her with brevity what they had heard relative to the interest of her late husband in what was then known as the Chipmunk Mine.

Few words were exchanged in the consummation of a contract. Mrs. Long told them as best she could all about the interest she and the children were supposed to have, and that they were three weeks behind with their payments; that news had come to her the day before that the men had already discovered a large run of valuable zinc ore; the names of the other members of the co-partnership, the location of the mine, and so on; and, in order that both parties might fully understand each and all parts of the agreement, they had Howe reduce it to writing, which he did in a plain business hand. Copies were made, and each retained one, after their respective signatures had been affixed. Tuesday having long been regarded a lucky day, it was further agreed verbally that he would begin the discharge of his duties the next morning.

Scarcely anything in the little house had been overlooked.

Before leaving, they observed the wonderful neatness and cleanliness and the tidy and orderly manner in which the furniture was kept; a combination book-case and writing-desk sat near the little window; on the wall, to the left of this, were three pictures of the old school kind, but quite attractive. The first one being very near Howe, he looked at it eagerly and read the almost faded subscript: "Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Alabama, March 29th, A. D. 1814. Between three thousand Tennessee Militia and seven hundred friendly Cherokee Indians, commanded by Andrew Jackson, and eight hundred Creek Indian warriors. The Creeks were overwhelmingly repulsed, over five hundred being killed; the remainder sued for peace." The next one, which was suspended by a beautiful cord, was the portrait of a man, apparently about fifty years of age; the undimmed eyes gazed placidly at the beholder from any point in the little room, and seemed to appeal to one with parental affection to pause and read the legend thereunder appended: "John Howard Payne, born, 1792; died, 1852. Was United States Minister to Tunis, in all, six years. As a song poet his renown is unsurpassed; his one effort has glorified the western world—he was the author of 'Home, Sweet Home.' " The third picture was not so attractive or fascinating, but came in for its due share of observation. It represented a shady dell, through which flowed an exceedingly limpid but swift-running stream; at intervals, however, between the rapids, the water stood in deep pools, but of crystal-like clearness; in one of these reservoirs, seemingly beneath its transparent surface, could easily be discerned the face of a most beautiful maiden in the cold embrace of death. Under this was written with ink, "Drowning of Ophelia"; and at the right side and below was added: "Her garments, heavy with their drink, pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay to

muddy death." Both men were now intently looking at this picture.

Howe turned to Quita, and asked: "Little one, do you know who wrote the lines under this picture?"

"Yes; my papa did it years ago, when Faula was a little babe not much larger than our little brother there. I remember well he copied it from the book we have there in the case."

Their attention was attracted to the book-case, and through the glass doors could be seen in well-arranged and orderly manner the complete works of William Shakespeare, Byron's poems, Victor Hugo's novels, many of Dickens' works, and about one hundred other books, all standard productions from eminent authors.

"I see you have good books," said Howe, still addressing Quita.

"Yes, sir; they were papa's. Many were given him when a boy, but now, since he's gone, mamma thinks we need other things more than books, so she has decided that we must sell them and the pictures. Some of them are quite valuable and ought to sell well. Could you send us a buyer for them, or some of them?"

Howe turned his face away from the child and made more than one vigorous endeavor to reply to her emotional inquiry, but all in vain, for, had his tongue been torn out, his organs of speech would not more obstinately have refused utterance. As a *finale*, however, of his indistinct words, he slowly shook his head and said: "No, little one, I cannot." Continuing, he told her he would talk with her mamma and try to arrange for them to keep the books and pictures. Before their departure, he mentioned the matter to Mrs. Long, and sought to impress upon her that the books were far more valuable to her and the children than to any other person.

"I know all you say is true, Mr. Howe," she replied; "but

this is not a question of value or worth, but of necessity. We have expended all our money but one dollar, and while we have had plenty, it is very evident to me that my little ones will soon be in want."

"Maybe not, lady; I've been barricading and fortifying all my life to obstruct the progress of humanity's arch enemy, the hungry wolf, and I believe I can get a decision over him in this round if I have a fair referee." So saying, he gave her his card with some highly colored piece of paper under it, that was neatly folded and almost escaped Mace's notice.

After good-byes, they left. On their foggy way back both maintained the reticence of a Quaker meeting, evidently weighing and reflecting upon what they had seen and heard at the humble home. By and by, as if moved by some spirit, Mace turned to Howe and asked: "What was that you gave the lady with your card?"

"What did it look like?"

"It looked like a flashy tinsel or some gaudy paper."

"Oh, yes; it was a note."

"A note?" said Mace, with a rising inflection in his voice. "Who wrote it?"

"I don't know."

"And what was on it?"

"I don't know that either, but it said something about twenty dollars having been deposited at Washington, payable to bearer on demand."

"By gum! Howe; if you are not a good man, you are such a perfect imitation as would fool strangers."

An order was given a suburban merchant at the little house that day for some groceries and nourishing foodstuffs, with a request to send a receipted bill. The sun concluded his daily circuit, and, throwing his refulgent beams under the gold-laced curtains of the west, sank down to his night's repose as calmly as the baby boy nestled beside her, the sweet authoress of his existence.

CHAPTER V.

I deem it meet to here narrate somewhat about the partners in the Chipmunk other than Mrs. Long, and to begin, one Heck Bruce, a blacksmith, owned one-fourth, and Wes Lane and Tip Lane, brothers, owned an undivided one-fourth each; and of all the disagreeable, cross, irritable, and impatient men on the round earth, these Lane brothers easily stood at the head of the class, being so abominably obdurate they would not have breathed air had not their automatic nostrils gulped it in without consultation or conference with their desires. Both worked at the mines. Bruce did not make a hand, but furnished instead a buxom, big-hearted young Swede, Peterson by name, who was very affable as well as industrious, and was something of a wit. When asked by anyone his given name, he invariably replied: "Oo youst gass one time." Of course, anyone would say "Ole," which was correct. And if he was further interrogated as to his age, he would say: "Ay youst lat oo gass dad; Ay tank oo bin dam gude gasser."

Ole was honest, truthful, and very observant. Mace's wagon and two tents on the ground early his first morning there had the same effect on the Lane brothers that the proverbial red flag does on the cow's indignant relative. Without waiting for any reception committee or flourish of trumpets, Mace appeared at the main shaft soon as the others were there, showed his copy of the contract with Mrs. Long, and reported ready for duty. Both the Lanes spoke up, their voices being as well united as trained musicians, telling him that Long had no interest until thirty-six dollars was paid to them, and that his widow and children were ragamuffins and tramps; that no piece of paper like the one he exhibited, signed by him or her,

would (not in the hands of a sheriff) have the force and effect of an execution on their property, using many vile and hateful epithets and much profanity to strengthen their extravagant and sweeping declarations. Mace told them, in the mannerly and straightforward way that always characterized his dealings that he came to them as a business man on a business mission, that war was one thing he was very desirous of avoiding; at the same time taking thirty-six dollars from his pocket, he offered it to Wes, the one who stood nearest him. He was much the larger and stronger of the brothers, and far exceeded Mace in height and weight.

"I'll not take her measley money, not one damn cent of it," said Wes, "and don't you tender it to me—I forbid it."

"And I violate your order," said Mace instantly.

Infuriated by Mace's reply, Wes stepped towards him with clenched fists, and yelled at him furiously: "And I don't like your looks either."

"You'll like my looks far better than your own in a brace of minutes," Mace rejoined.

By this time the two men were within easy reach of each other, Lane striking overhanded at Mace with all his strength. It developed early that Mace was a dodger and ducker of the extraordinary kind, and would have been called a "top-notcher" in fistic parlance. He kept out of Lane's way as easily as a hawk could keep from a prairie fire. After Wes had landed on the atmosphere a dozen or more good stiff blows, Mace relaxed his guard and let his awkward and clumsy antagonist strike him a glancing stroke on the left shoulder, and this apparent score of success in his favor fed the flickering flame of hope within him so much that he plunged at Mace with vengeance on his brow and murder in his heart, seeming to double his speed and force at each thrust. At length, as Mace afterwards said, he became tired of wasting so much ammunition on the

skirmish-line, and as Wes relaxed his muscles in the termination of one of his giant-like rushes Mace took a fine bead sight at him about one inch in front and a little below Wes's left ear with his right first. No mountainer ever sped a bullet of destruction in the direction of a squirrel head with more unerring accuracy. Mace could have said as did the immortal bard of Avon, "'Twas mine; 'tis his." Wes fell; and not like the tall king of the forest yielding to the untiring energy of the woodman with his keen axe, but like a milk-white flake of snow crystals he sank down as if apologizing to the greensward for so impolitely imposing his lameness upon its grassy mat. He kept on sinking, his eyes rolled back in their sockets, his lips turned pale, and his limbs quivered as he lay. These conditions only distinguished him from lifelessness, his fierceness and savagery having vanished, and seemingly his life was not far in the rear of them. Failing to resuscitate as soon as Mace thought he should, Mace hastened to his wagon and returned with a flask of the real American fluid bottled in bond eight years previous. Nothing would have delighted Wes more than this liquid had he been precisely *compos mentis*, for of all sweet sounds that ever gladdened his ears, "Come on, boys," was by odds the most sweet; but at this juncture the spirit of corn had to be administered to him in dreamland.

It has long been the desire of humanitarians that in the warfare of the future projectiles and shells may be loaded with narcotics, which on bursting will give out sleep-producing fumes; in this manner a whole army may be thrust into involuntary repose and subsequently awakened into peaceable captivity. This hope of philanthropists, dormant for ages, was well-nigh attained in this affray, for after resuscitation Wes was as docile as a Belgian hare. Leaving the ring, the scene of his late humiliating defeat, he came back to the shaft, and for quite a while remained silent, during which time his

brother became very belligerent, making all kinds of direful threats against Mace, offering to take up the gauge of battle where his unhappy brother had left it. Mace remained perfectly still, and gave Tip a very hard and direct look. Seeing that a fatherly frown was proving a poor sedative, he motioned with his left hand for Tip to keep away from him; both the frown and motion were about to be unavailing as methods of self-defense, when Mace commenced to reason with him after this manner:

“Say, boy, if you can’t bite hard, don’t show your teeth. I’m a storage battery, and there are scores more of the stiff ones in stock where the one came from your friend here ran against. It would do me no good to give you pain, and you still less; you’d better be a smooth-faced coward than a black-eyed bully. I saw you start toward me with the pick-handle, and also saw him [pointing to Ole] take it away from you while he [pointing to Wes] was getting ready for his finish. You couldn’t hit me with that billet working eight hours a day from now till frost; you couldn’t win this game if your hand was all trumps and you had your partner’s best thrown in.”

Mace’s prudent remarks blunted the keenness of Tip’s pugilistic inclination as effectually as his well-directed blow had rendered Wes’s engine of slaughter steamless. By this time the brothers were both listening to Mace’s every utterance, and Ole came in for his share of attention. About the first well-defined pause Mace made in his comments, Ole availed himself of the opportunity, and explained to him as above set out the respective interest that each partner had in the mine, adding also that he was only working for Mr. Bruce, and claimed no right or title to the property; also suggesting that he thought it best to go and get Bruce to come out forthwith, in the hope that the trouble might be adjusted. Ole’s diplomacy was concurred in by all, Mace hinting that an invitation to Mrs. Long

to attend would be in keeping with fairness, but, on account of her recent illness, she would be compelled to decline.

Bruce came in due time, and the quintette organized for business by electing him their presiding officer. He was a man of vast experience; had been born in eastern Tennessee, and was then about fifty-six years of age; giving his own words, "had not been reared at all, was branded at a general roundup, and turned out with the rest of the neighborhood stock; had been in the Union Army four years during the big Jeff Davis war, and had fit like a yaller dog with a black mouth." His grandfathers had both been with Marion in the Revolution; one of them was paid off in the old Continental money, which was never redeemed—his uncles and aunts had some of it "till plumb yit"; his guardian carried him to Greeneville when he was a mere shaver; he there read the sign of "A. Johnson, Tailor," who was afterwards President of the United States; he had seen blood and brains on many a contested old cotton-field; his mother he could not remember, except like a dream or vague vision; someone held him up by the arms and said something to him; he looked into a coffin and saw her face—it was white; he saw his brothers and father there, and beside the dead mother lay a tiny-faced infant; all the people came and took her away; he did not go; his father came back after night, took him up and kissed him, and said, "Heck, your mother and little sister are dead." These events were inadhesive, his recollection of them being indistinct. Further on, he remembered well, his brothers were all mean to him, except one. They lived in a little one-room log house, which had a large fireplace.

At this juncture Bruce looked at all his auditors and asked them if his reminiscent discourse was taxing their patience or trespassing upon their time. There were cries of "No, no; go

on, go on!" Resuming his narrative, he indicated that Ole had told him of the early morning difficulty.

"Yes, boys, I'm sorry you had the trouble; it adds another weight to my burden-laden shoulders." He spoke touchingly. "All we positively know about trouble is that it is absolutely certain to cease; the great charnel-house of the tomb is the last havoc, but the immortal Burns tells us that it is the poor man's dearest friend. Experience teaches that his words are true. My life has been one continuous up-hill pull, and the further I get the steeper the hill and the slicker the track. The shadows of death are not terrifying to me. I have felt the distress and strain of pinching poverty, undergone privations, encountered dangers, and endured hardships; and for what? I repeat, for *what*? Is it to earn the sweet repose that is due us in the little ditch? If so, many of us are entitled to a lengthy nap.

"Well, my history didn't stop with my mother's death. At eight years of age my father died, leaving me penniless; the youngest of seven children, only one of whom cared anything for me, a brother just older—peace to his ashes—his memory has ever been an incessant gleam to me. At my father's death this brother and I were bound out, as it was then called, both being given to a gruff old blacksmith who was owned in fee simple—body and soul—by a little bullet-eyed woman whose first name was Mary M. I suppose the *M* was for Magdalene, but, unlike the other Magdalene, her seven devils were never cast out. Her husband often said she had a little bottle of hell on the back of her neck and the stopper was out of it every day in the week except Sunday. She was very devotional and was an enthusiastic church-worker; no one was ever entirely welcome in her house but a preacher, and the finer-looking the minister the more welcome he was. There are many such women. She hated children, *the old snake*. And I also arise to remark, while I am so close to the subject, that

there is one rule relating to the children of men that has no exceptions, namely: *A person who hates children loves no one.* Chalk that down where it can't be scraped off."

Webster in his reply to Hayne received no better attention from his audience than did Bruce on this occasion. Fain would he have closed his narrative and taken up the regular order of business, which, of course, was to try to arrange a treaty of peace, or at least a cessation of hostilities between the partners, and, if possible, a resumption of work; but when he indicated his readiness to conclude his comment, Mace asked him if he might propound one question. He cheerfully responded in the affirmative, thinking, of course, it would concern their mining venture; but it was so unlike what his expectation had mapped out that he seemed at a loss to make answer. Mace's manner was plain and his words unadorned: "Tell us about your brother."

The good-natured Bruce welcomed the inquiry, and resumed:

"Well, yes—my brother and I lived with the old blacksmith and his religious little *help eat*. We worked on his tillage plot and in the shop like poor Nellie Gray, 'from early dawn till close of day,' until the peaceful blue faded from one-third of our American flags, leaving red and white the remaining colors; the red representing blood's crimson, the white, death's paleness. In our boyish simplicity, we chose to cast our destiny with that tri-colored ensign whose flexible folds no people had long dared disrespect; upon the righteousness of that choice posterity must render its verdict—the question is not mine to fix.

"Leaving the offensive and unpleasant elements of the battle-field, where my brother lost his life, the design of my talk and intent is to impress upon you the spirit of his last utterance; his broken sentences, feebly expressed but teeming with intellectual activity, have ever since been the rule of my

life. Our regiment had made three unsuccessful attempts to drive the enemy (our brothers) from their stronghold, and our company was in the van and leading another charge, my brother and I shoulder to shoulder. It was near the close of the war, and we were thoroughly inured to the scenes of battle and slaughter. Between the disconcerted roar of musketry I heard my brother call my name, and turning to him quickly, I saw him falling; I bent over him and asked, 'Lewis, are you hurt?' 'Yes, hurt, but I have no pain,' he replied, and then motioned for me to get close to him, as he had somewhat to tell me. A blood-thirsty bullet had accomplished its direful mission. I held my ear very near him, and think I remember his every term and expression. It is a message of great value, and, if heeded, would almost obliterate the world's misery: 'Heck, if you live through this foolish war, always compromise your differences where it can be done with honor.' Say, men, the sound waves there put in motion by that dying tongue more than a quarter-century ago vibrate in my memory to this good hour as clearly and vividly as life."

The result of Bruce's remarks, diversified and different from any of their expectations, was well-nigh miraculous, and especially so to the warlike Lane brothers, who both now manifested a desire to leave the settlement and adjudication of the entire case to him. Mace assured them that he had no vote or voice in the matter, but was doubly certain that all Mrs. Long wanted or would attempt to get would be that which was legally and honestly the property of her and the children. Events for the next few minutes came thick and fast, and what might have been an expensive and almost endless lawsuit was adjusted and settled by mutual agreement with generous and liberal concessions to the claims of all parties in interest. The thirty-six dollars tendered by Mace was accepted and divided equally between Bruce and the Lanes. Mace was assigned a place to

work, and it was agreed he should represent Mrs. Long as her attorney in fact.

Snowy-winged Tranquillity spread wide her protecting wings, and under their unblemished folds sheltered the Chipmunk, while Dame Luck, that indecipherable pre-requisite to all successful mining ventures, poured the bedazzling contents of earth's virgin wealth into their ore-bins. The week's sales netted eight hundred and fifty dollars and forty cents, above royalty paid the land-owner and all other expenses.

"By gum!" said Mace, as he left the office of the Smelter Company with Mrs. Long's money, "two hundred and twelve dollars and sixty cents—that feels velvety."

The Monday issue of *The Miners' Messmate* was hurled into Howe's office with the usual "Pape!" accompaniment; the following comforting news he perused cursorily, and then read aloud:

"A most extraordinary strike of lead and zinc has been lately developed near the north slope of the old Tenderfoot Ridge, about three miles east of town, by the Chipmunk Mining Company, composed of our well-informed and good-natured 'village blacksmith,' Heck Bruce, two brothers by the name of Lane, whose first names our news-gatherer could not learn, and also Mrs. Long, widow of Thomas Long, whose death was announced in these columns something like a month ago. The Chipmunk, if all reports are true, will be a star producer. The company cleared over eight hundred dollars last week. They are advertising for twenty more good miners at the highest wages. See our want ad (second column, next page). *The Messmate* extends to them its unstinted congratulations on their good strike, and especially to Mrs. Long and her children, who, through the skill and efforts of their late husband and father, now find themselves the possessors of such unforeseen and unexpected benefactions."

CHAPTER VI.

The Chipmunk during the second week showed more signs of success and far more favorable appearances than the first. Ole had been agreed upon as superintendent, many good miners had been put to work, the ore-buyers had all read *The Messmate's* comment, and by the middle of the week their ore-bins had been the main attraction for the representatives of every smelter in the district, as well as capitalists, promoters, and financial magnates galore. Mace had been given the place known in lead and zinc mining as "culling," a position always assigned to boys and inexperienced or green hands; a place, however, of great importance, and requiring as much work and more painstaking than any around a paying mine. When the whistle would blow its shrill and high-pitched blast announcing noon, and all the miners would come out of the ground and open their well-filled dinner-pails, Mace could be seen briskly making his way to his tents and wagon, watering and feeding his team; then a little current of smoke would slowly ascend skyward—sometimes, in cloud-like gossamer, it appeared to hang over his habitation as if in benediction. The men paid little, if any, attention to him; he was always on time at his post, not once was he tardy, and the timekeeper gave him credit for six full days in every week.

There is a knowledge, derived only from actual trial and practice, which teaches us to distinguish the good from the bad in mankind with that accuracy and exactness approaching infallibility. Without any intent to laud or eulogize one class of humanity over his brother, we are constrained to think that knowledge is possessed and enjoyed by men who delve in Mother Earth almost in the superlative degree; and it came to

pass, as all the men became better acquainted with Mace, their unbiased opinions were that he was a man—not only an adult human being, but a combined genius and gentleman; enjoying uncommon physical strength and mental vigor, linked and coupled with a disposition that invited and imparted courtesy, sociability, and sympathy, his every look, word, action, and gesture were unmistakable symptoms of his unbounded nobleness of soul. If anyone got hurt about the mine, he was invariably the first to him, and by the exercise of his sound judgment about simple remedies and minor surgery, first aids, etc., the mashed hand, the sprained ankle, the bruised face, were on the highway to a speedy recovery. Nor was he so clannish as to squander all his pity and tenderness on the distressed of his own species; dogs, cats, horses, birds, every animality shared its due allotment in his good exertions to mitigate misery. He often said: “It don’t do me as much good to kill a quail as it does it harm to die, and that by the excruciating torture of a shotgun. I caught a trout once when a small boy, on a blued steel hook; the poor creature surged with all its strength and with every sinew to remain in its smooth liquid home. I tugged it to me, and on the thirsty and unsympathetic ground its crimson and clotted blood left an ineffaceable record of my guilt. I saw the reflection of my face in the clear stream. I said, ‘Melvin, you are a murderer!’ I never fished again.”

By the middle of the week the output of the Chipmunk was enormous. The Lane brothers were presumably in a good frame of mind; if not, they diligently sought to create that impression, for if they harbored any ill will toward Mace, it was not the kind that breaks out on slight provocation; however, neither of them had spoken to him since his bout with Wes. Thursday afternoon it was decided to close down for repairs to the machinery, which would require half a day; hence all the miners were notified at noon that they would not

be needed until the next morning, but were also told their wages would be allowed for the time, the same as if they were at work. Instead of going to their homes and boarding-houses, nearly all stayed and watched the machinists mend and refit the broken machinery.

The reader had best now be told that in mining camps, especially those of quick growth and development, often called "booming" or "roaring," few, if any, of the laboring-men go by their right names, and the Chipmunk was no exception to the rule. There were "Shorty," "Slim," "The Duke," "Kentucky Kid," "Cræsus," "Monkey-wrench," "Colorado Chris," "Squire" McGuire, "Davy Crockett," "Joe-Joe," "Pompadour Pet," "Nellie Bly," and so on were they christened with some appellation relative to their looks, habits, size, disposition, or nativity.

"Shorty" weighed two hundred and thirty pounds and three pennyweights (so he said) and was five feet and one-sixteenth of an inch tall. "Slim" could lick salt off a country school-house and not tiptoe. "The Duke" knew more English history than Macaulay. "Kentucky Kid" was from the Blue-grass State, of course, but would not say what county; they often called him a feudist. "Cræsus," as his name implied, was very, very well to do; coal, coke, wood, and oil were too common for his heating; money was his cheapest fuel.

"Monkey-wrench" was a cross-eyed grass-widower, about thirty years of age. His name had an historical origin. Many years before he had been arrested for stealing a monkey-wrench. He pleaded not guilty; the jury stood three to three; it was one of those criminal prosecutions where none but the officers were hurt or had their supersensitive feelings outraged. There are many such cases—far too many. The prosecuting attorney, either on account of the inferiority of the charges against the defendant or the mortification of his pride in the failure to

convict "Monkey-wrench," nollied the case. Blinkins, the poor constable, lost his fees; he ran for re-election at the earnest solicitation of his friends (his two deputies), but he was too lingering and sluggish about it; he got three whole votes, as shown by the official count; he became mulish and sullen, and was never afterwards in active sympathy with his party, and finally became a private detective.

"Colorado Chris" was a red-faced German with Burnside whiskers; they resembled fine-cut tobacco—some good kind advertised in cabooses and on coal-houses and covered bridges; he had worked in the West with the United States surveyors back in the seventies, and dragged the chain that laid out most of Denver, Pueblo, and other cities; his vocal organs were well adjusted for long distances.

"Squire" McGuire was an all-around boarding-house referee; his opinions on baseball and other athletic sports were weighty and very liable to turn the balance in any reasonable mind, and in any game of cards his decisions were final.

"Davy Crockett," unlike his renowned prototype only in statesmanship, was his ideal model in the destruction of wild beasts, and many were the bruins and grizzlies whose shaggy pelts he had nailed against the gable of his log cabin in the forest, some of which may since "have warmed the backs of monarchs."

"Joe-Joe" signed his name across the back of his checks "Willis Reed"; the bankers all knew his signature—he had no trouble getting money; he wrote two hands—one kind none could read but him, the other kind he couldn't read himself.

"Pompadour Pet," so called from his French topknot and his effeminacy, was exceedingly womanish; spent much of his spare time washing his face and hands and quite a sum of money for pomades, bay rum, and other toilet articles.

"Nellie Bly," otherwise known as "Pizen," and whose

real name was Smith, had been a foot-racer in his boyhood days, and from his own account of the places he had seen, and the scanty portion of time he had consumed in going from one to another, was certainly double-gearred about like the prescription called for. For example, he once attended a Christmas-tree in Portland, Oregon, and on the following New Year's Day ate a delicious turkey dinner with a great-uncle in Worcester County, Maryland, and made every inch of it by freight. According to his own testimony, he was a hummer till further orders; but his gigantic speed lost him no friends, for love—that inestimable jewel of the human mind, kindled with beauty and fanned by worth—kept up its ancient reputation, and, like charity, its twin sister, hid all his other faults.

The machinists had completed their work and were preparing to leave, all the miners being still at the works, when Mace came from his tented home and with him three little chubby-handed girls. Their honest doll-like countenances bore convincing evidences of childhood's spotless qualities.

"Say, 'Squire,' " said "Pompadour Pet," as he put into his vest a small pocket looking-glass, at which he had been earnestly gazing in the hope of deciphering some new attraction about his face, "what do you think of Mace's children? ain't they the finest peaches in the basket?"

McGuire, as was his wont, deliberated a season, as if weighing every syllable of the question, and then gravely remarked: "I certainly consider them well worthy of notice."

The decision of "Squire" well-nigh settled it. By this time the men were all admiring their little visitors, and Mace very courteously had them shake hands with Ole, the "Squire," "Crœsus," "Joe-Joe," and, in fact, nearly all the miners. It so happened that Wes Lane was standing near "Joe-Joe," and Mace presented all three of the little beauties to him, whose rough and unpolished hand was the reflected semblance of his

stony heart. They greeted him with childlike and untainted purity, after which Wes—directing his remarks at “Squire,” Ole, and “Crœsus,” who were in a group to themselves, said: “By gum! there is the most handsome and attractive bunch of little ones in this here camp. It’s a damn stinkin’ shame that they couldn’t have somebody for a daddy.” (Thinking they were Mace’s children.) Mace heard a part of what he said, but understood little of his meaning; however, judging from his surly looks, he divined that it was something derogatory to himself, and, quick as a meteoric flash, he addressed Wes: “Yes, sir, you scientific ring general, these are your ‘ragamuffins and tramps.’ Do they still look it?”

Wes made no reply, well knowing it was his turn to keep still. He knew instantly, from Mace’s remarks, that they were Long’s orphan children, and whether from his conscious guilt for not having attended their father’s funeral and assisted the distressed family, or from the bitter recollection of his shameful expressions about them in his anger toward Mace at their first meeting, it would have been a hard task to correctly determine.

It was many weeks before the laborers learned the cause of Wes’s sourness of temper and his want of sociability, especially in the presence of Mace; truth is, they all did not know it until after he had sold out his interest in the mine. “Davy Crockett” suggested for him the name of “Herod,” as he wanted to destroy young children, and to this day Wes Lane is known only to the old settlers, while every child in the community is as familiar with old “Herod” Lane as they are with the sounds of the noon whistles.

The net proceeds from the ore sold that week was something over one thousand four hundred and twenty dollars. There was ample cause for renewed rejoicing in Mrs. Long’s cottage that night when the Smelter Company’s check for her weekly

dividend was given to her by Mace on his way from town to his lonely camp on the common. Quita's pressing invitation for him to stay and take supper with them was ineffectual; his excuses were many, chief of which was that Whale and Delilah were always lonely in his absence; bestowing upon her the expression of his gratitude for her kind request.

Mrs. Long, now able to be up and help the girls about their home work, and administering to the many wants of the little youngster, was in as good cheer as the circumstances of her widowhood would allow. She asked the girls, before retiring, if they would sing for mamma, and so they sang, their baby voices clear as a buglehorn call on tropical seas at twilight, that poetical prophecy, "Little Brown Hands." We give the last verse:

"Those who toil bravely are strongest,
The humble and poor become great;
And so, from these brown-handed children
Shall grow mighty rulers of state.
The pen of the author and statesman,
The noble and wise of the land,
The sword and the chisel and palette,
Shall be held in the little brown hand."

CHAPTER VII.

No less a personage than Mark Antony set the example of telling people things that they themselves do know. Sanctioned and made valid by such illustrious authority, the writer feels that the reader will pardon him for presuming to tell things with which he may be already well informed; and to begin, in general there is no metallic mine but what has its thin spots, places where the ore gives out, breaks off, pitches, dips, "goes blind," becomes streaky, and so on. On Wednesday of the third week this was the condition of the Chipmunk. The greater the effort with pick and shovel, and drill and dynamite, the thinner grew the ore. Ole's report to Bruce that night was, "Ay tank a goo blind on may." Now Bruce had spent thousands of dollars prospecting for minerals and grubstaking old miners; had become callous to the tales of "Lost out," "Hard luck," "Went broke," and the like, to such an extent that evil news never appeared to unnerve him. He told Ole to drill deeper, put in more powder, and double, if possible, his former exertions; but all in vain, for subterranean economy has so ordained that where a valuable substance is not located, all the work, labor, effort, mineral wizards, and sorcery since the dawn of time will not put one grain of mineral in the ore-boxes. And so the nuggets in the Chipmunk's drifts got smaller and fewer, and finally Ole's prediction came true—it "went blind." The last of the week brought the owners face to face with an expense account three times larger than the net income. Adversity is the dynamo that generates character, and an inherent wicked disposition yearns for a series of events which oppose success; misfortune is their meat, calamity their drink, and affliction is the sluggish slough in which they bathe their distresses.

As before intimated, the Lane brothers were anything under the arch of high heaven but gentlemen; they were mean, base, and contemptible, and this ill luck that had befallen them increased their despicableness ten-fold; owning as they did one-half of the mine, it is no difficult task to readily understand how their ill will would imperil prosperous results. Early in the beginning of the fourth week it became obvious that no procedure on the part of Ole would meet their approval; so opposed were they to his management that they would willingly have given away half of their holdings to displace him. The regular order of affairs at the Chipmunk took the three ancient degrees—namely, bad, worse, worst. It is known to weather prophets—and almost everyone else—that when a river gets so low it can't run, it is soon going to rise; and when business affairs get to their worst, a change for the better may be looked for. All signs indicated that financial disaster was unlimbering and leveling her big guns on the Chipmunk. The Lanes wouldn't work or agree to pay any part of the current expenses; they wouldn't "drive the snipe or hold the sack," as they put it. A wrangle ensued, as always will where there are too many bosses. "A regiment of officers and no privates," said Bruce when told of the conditions. Mace took no part in their bickering, but began to suspect they wanted to buy the interest of Bruce and Mrs. Long. His suspicions were well grounded, for they talked nothing but sell, sell; claimed they had procured a buyer who would look at nothing but their past record, also asserting that the best mine on this green globe is a deep hole in the earth with water at the bottom of it and a big liar at the top.

Mace had previously told Bruce his idea of what their conduct indicated to him. So at the meeting of the owners to devise ways and means to prosecute the venture further he and Bruce knew what to expect, and by his skill and dexterity in

such negotiations had led the Lanes to believe almost any cash offer would be accepted by Mrs. Long and the blacksmith. At length, after refusing many propositions, the Lanes agreed to set a price on the entire mine, and to let the other side give or take, never reckoning but that they were the market for the property; they fixed the price at eight hundred dollars for it, and their half was taken by Mace, the four hundred dollars was paid them cash down, and they were out of the Chipmunk and out of these pages for good.

Indulgent reader, the following may be something with which you are very familiar, and if so, we trust the pardon previously prayed for will still be in force in our behalf.

To begin, metallic substances in Mother Earth are seldom, if ever, found in stratified formations, but instead are found in abrupt and irregular shapes—in lodes, rings, circles, fissures, and the like; especially is this true with lead and zinc ores. Sometimes these metallic veins assume the form and shape of ugly and deformed objects, and such was the Chipmunk, which might be said to closely resemble a great spider; and the month's labor had been occupied upon one of its massive limbs—beginning about midway between the hip and the knee, they had amputated and exhumed this member down to and including its very toes. After the purchase of the Lanes' interests, the next step taken was to reorganize the company, which they accordingly did, Mace being chosen president and Ole retained as superintendent. Mace told Bruce the half interest he had bought was owned jointly by himself and Mrs. Long, making her the owner of one-half of the property. Work was resumed the next day; not, however, until all former plans and measures had been entirely reversed.

“Where you lose money is a good place to go to hunt for it, if you want to find it,” observed Mace; “we'll cut directly opposite the way we were going when she went blind.” Ole

concurred, so the ground men were instructed to about face. A few violent explosions of powder in the drift made the Chipmunk glitter like a tinner's shop, and, pantomime-like, reflected the miners' lamp lights as the new discovery reflected joy, comfort, and blissfulness from the faces of its owners. Two weeks passed while the whole force was hoisting the remaining portion of the spider's leg, which brought in round numbers three thousand dollars, and then the long-wished-for but unexpected suddenly happened; the main body of this huge web-spinner who so feelingly "invites silly little flies to walk into his parlor" was now having its anatomy dissected by surgeons unknown to his spidership.

The Chipmunk now became much talked about and praised; its fame was unconfined; metropolitan dailies gave it valuable space, and scores and scores were the mentions it received by the local press. *The Pick and Shovel*, a religio-political paper, edited by an old maid from somewhere (a long way off), and who was supposed to have previously repulsed several matrimonial bayonet charges, ended one of its extolling comments regarding the Chipmunk and its owners thus:

"And our modest Mr. Bruce, transformed as by the wave of a magician's wand from a blacksmith to a capitalist, is the last one on earth to show any evidences of the change, either by dress or actions; his one and two thousand dollars per week income has no more effect on him than his former earnings at the fire and forge. Melvin Mace, an equal owner, is a most original and unique character. The *Pick and Shovel* reporter found him at his tents and wagon yesterday afternoon (Wednesday), and although a stranger in this mining district, it is remarkable how many people he knows, and how familiar he is with mining in general and with the Chipmunk in particular. The company now employs more than one hundred men, working day and night. He told our representative that his

company only had one rule, which is: Hire only men who look one straight in the face with both eyes—"give 'em both barrels," as he puts it. Long may the Chipmunk thrive!"

So was the excellence of the mine heralded throughout the country, with little or no abatement; buyers, brokers, and expert mineralogists were struck with wonder and astonishment at its enormous productions.

Saturday night, as Mace cleared away his supper dishes, which consisted of as few things as indispensableness would tolerate, someone tapped on his tent front and asked admittance; it was Howe, and his first meeting with Mace since the cloudy Monday when they visited the bereaved Mrs. Long and her little ones.

"Don't ask if you can come in this place," replied Mace as he held his lantern so as to discern whom he addressed; "come in; everything that breathes can always find welcome at the place where I reside."

"Except rattlesnakes," said Howe.

"No, not excepting rattlesnakes; for I let one of those fellows stay all night with me last week, and if he had gone early the next morning, he would perhaps have been doing well yet, but he insisted on putting in overtime, so I court-martialed him."

"Did execution follow sentence?"

"Well, hardly. I executed him first and read the death-warrant to his remains; like most other felons, he understood it about as well then as he would have before. But say, Howe, where does your log-book show you've been sailing?"

"I was sailing without bearings; my needle dipped here, so I hove to, seeing this luniform object—your lantern—and made landing in this port. I've heard that you've been having some smooth sailing yourself since our cloudy drive."

"Well, I have, Howe, but, like all other good luck, veins

and pockets, there is no telling the evil moment it will quit me. I've been over the earth quite a bit, and had my fingers almost fastened to a fortune more than once, and in some mysterious manner it has always escaped. I often think I was not modeled for any purpose but to make money for others. I organized a mining company once in the Northwest; we struck good paying copper in less than a month after the concern was fairly on a paying basis. My associates—some of whom I had kept from starvation during the previous winter—entered into a conspiracy to defraud me out of my interest, and, by all kinds of deceitful practices, they succeeded. I whipped four or five of them and shot one, but he soon recovered; the old doctrine about the survival of the fittest applies to all things in nature but the human family—that rule exerts little, if any, power or strength over men and women. Here I am talking my history to you, and I know you don't want to listen to one word of it; you came to hear about the Chipmunk."

"I came to hear *you*," replied Howe, "on the themes of your own choosing, but personal history is infinitely interesting to me."

"And to me too—sometimes. I've seen the time when I was compelled to hear some old 'has been' fossil rehearse his past life—relating events that never occurred, magnifying ten diameters those that did, until I'm pretty plentifully disgusted with the whole seed, breed, and generation of such blow-hards. And these old gratis advice-givers, on the stern of the same leaky boat, they can see all things in front and remember everything behind; they copyrighted 'I told you so' before other people learned to talk or even make signs, and are giving good advice when they themselves are too old to set a bad example; I tell you, I've got a sufficiency of them also. Nine-tenths of these old ducks spent the time and prime of their youth as the boys of to-day; probably they were a trifle short on beer

and flavored chewing tobacco, but sweethearts were abroad in the land then the same as now and as they will be in the hilarious henceforward."

"Howe, I'm dang glad you came out to-night. It's raining, and you must remain until morning."

"Impossible, Mace; you must excuse me this time. I'll be off soon."

"Nothing is impossible. Stay right here; I'll initiate you into camp life—nothing is healthier. If all sickly folks would camp out in summer, the doctors would in winter, or go at something else for a livelihood. No one ever heard of a sick Gipsy."

"I believe that," said Howe.

"I know it," Mace continued, "from my own experience. I had a long spell of sickness once in Wisconsin; my doctor found I had money, and he had me take everything in a drug store but putty and paint and he would have prscribed them if my money had held out. Finally a boy told me about a wagon-trip that cured him, so I started for one myself. I was out six weeks, and came back a sound man."

"What was the matter with you?"

"I was in the third stage of every disease known to medical literature, from corns to consumption—so the doctor said."

"You were ill, weren't you?"

"I was somewhat under the weather, by gum! and his cheek was the capsheaf of the whole farce. Why, he had the nerve to tell me his last bottle of medicine (which I hurled through a hedge fence) had brought me right out—I guess he meant out of money. I'll tell you, Howe, there's competition in rascality, and these gold-brick fellows don't want to land on you but once. Here I go again censuring others, criticising their faults, and getting caught in my own trap. Howe, do you smoke?"

"Yes, sir, I smoke, chew, and dip snuff occasionally; I've a standing reward to anyone who will discover a new use for the nasty plant. Here is a plug; do you want a chew?"

"No, thanks; I have tobacco, I'm never out. What do you chew for, Howe? just to get the juice out of it?"

"Yes, sir, that is the secondary reason; the first is, because my parents punished me for chewing when I was small."

"Mine did me the same," said Mace; "that was the first verse in the long chapter of my boyhood's distresses. My father gave me an unmerciful whipping for chewing tobacco. He was himself an inveterate chewer and so were both of my grandfathers. I never passed one hour awake that I was not seeing someone chew tobacco; these examples, strengthened by hereditary force, made the habit a part of my little nature, almost as inseparable as life itself. I contended I had as much right to use it as I had to use my right hand in preference to my left; I had the desire for it that a duck has for water—an intense anxiety for something I had no more control over than I had over the price of cab-rides in Jerusalem."

"Exactly; you were two boys instead of one," Howe remarked; "and that is the rock that wrecks many a cargo of parental influence—the punishment of things that are not crimes."

"It wrecked his influence with me for a certainty—then, now, and always, or any other man with a jowl full of tobacco who makes a whipping-post out of a tender and nervous little boy for munching something that his taste calls for and that nothing else under the canopy of heaven will gratify. And that leads me to think of another superannuated doctrine of Solomon—'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' A man who had three hundred wives and seven hundred lady friends can't tell me anything about children. That rule must have been enacted by a congress of grave-robbers. It's akin to another

opinion—"And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer unto him also the other cheek.' If I were allowed to revise these dogmas, the first one would sound about like this: 'Spare the rod and save the child.' And the next: 'And unto her that kisseth you on the one cheek, offer her the other with your whole face, then spar for wind just a little, and pay them back with an exorbitant interest till the sound of the gong; be your own referee and time-keeper, and make the rounds forty minutes, provided she has never been punished when a child for holding her breath.' I would like to see the right hand of every sane person that's in favor of these amendments. What a contrast they would be to the old cruel claws and paws that would make the contrary sign. Yes, sir; yes, s-i-r; being as personal history is so interesting to you, just help yourself to this box of fine-cut and these cigars. It's raining too hard, or I'd go after a box of snuff, and I'll tell you about it. It may be tiresome; if so, let me hear from you, and I'll change your brands of tobacco."

"Have no fear from that source," rejoined Howe; "our lives have been so much alike, the recounting of yours is doubly interesting to me. If you have time, proceed; I'm a glutton for listening."

"Time! I've got all there is, and besides, I'm like a hen sitting on a nest of white door-knobs—my time is not valuable to-night."

"Well, I don't think I have ever told you, but I will now, that I was born on a farm in the southern part of the State of Maine and lived there until I was nearly seventeen years old; the paths I traveled then were well filled with pitfalls, quagmires, and sharp rocks. My first sad misfortune—or, rather, a series of cross-accidents that befell me—was that I had four brothers older than myself, two of whom were very religious and, as matter of course, exercised far more influence over our

parents than the remainder of the children, as well as relatives, friends, and neighbors. Self-preservation taught me to love these brothers—like a rabbit loves a pair of greyhounds. I made little effort to conceal my affection. Time was tedious to me then. The favorite sons were sent away to boarding-school, and whether from want of ability or application I never knew, but they never learned as much as I did in 'District Number Three'; to be sure, it pained their pride and self-esteem during vacation for me to spell words they'd miss, work out sums they'd failed on, correct their mistakes and improper language—in fact, prove to all but themselves that they were blockheads. My superiority over them augmented their deep-seated prejudices; they easily persuaded my father that I didn't need much of an education; hence 'District Number Three' is my *alma mater*; so, you see, I never left college or seminary, but they left me. Howe, this regales me, it does, by gum! and before I make it snow here in August, I want to tell you about that tobacco trouble.

"Among the people who lived near us was one La Rue Van Camp, and by nature, education, desire, and habits he outranked any ordinary villain I've ever encountered. He had the eye of a skunk, the mouth of a frog, and a moral tendency as low down as a snake's abdomen. Such was old Van Camp. I say 'old'; he wasn't old to hurt—perhaps forty-five, but was much older than honest; his devotional habit gave him boundless influence with my father, so much so that he borrowed our tools, horses, harness, wagons—in fact, anything that he wanted; and if his crop became weedy or foul, father would have us boys (any but the select two I told you about) go over and do his work. Once he pretended he had rheumatism; I was detailed to work out his field, and it was no little job, as the weather was very warm and his crop was choked with weeds well-nigh out of the ground. I never see the sign

in the parks, 'KEEP OFF THE GRASS,' but that I think of old Van Camp's field. Some local joker had posted that 'Keep off' command just inside the dilapidated old gate through which I had to pass. I had ample cause later on to regret not having obeyed the order. Beaver-like, I toiled day after day until his field was in good order. The last day I worked, old Van Camp came out about the middle of the afternoon. I was chewing tobacco hard and working harder. He spied me spit, and that old, contemptible, shameless, sheep-killing cur had the impudence to tell me he intended telling my father about my tobacco habit, and what's worse and more of it, he did tell him, and my little back paid the penalty, not for the violation of any law, rule, or duty—I was a victim of treachery and ingratitude.

"Let me tell you, Howe, and I'm going to call in a good dead man for a witness to help me—General Sam Houston. He once said that ingratitude was the blackest and basest sin above hell. Now, I don't believe there is any hell, and I haven't seen anybody (except a very few colored ministers of late) that does believe in it, but I do believe with all the zeal and fervency my soul can summon that ingratitude is playing up pretty close to the limit of the unpardonables; nothing in the whole list of human transgressions approaches it; it is the mother of murder, the father of falsehood, the brother of brutality, the sister of shame, the daughter of disgrace, and the spawn of shattered character.

"Well, I got the trouncing and old Van Camp got his crop cleaned out, ready for the next rain; and he got more, too: I made an entry on the red side of my ledger against him. I was little past twelve years old then and small for that age; the next spring I merged into 'teens,' the most important part of my life. The earth's crust gradually got cooler and smoother to me, except Sundays and sleepless nights; Time mended his

movement somewhat—made longer jumps and more of them. I seldom had a new garment, but instead was compelled to wear the cast-away clothing of the favored brothers. Money and I were total strangers. I was afraid to own a dollar for fear of being arrested for counterfeiting. Two or three months during the coldest part of the long winters I attended the district school; seed-time and harvest came and went; I had little rest, less recreation, and no real comforts. The only pleasurable sensations I ever enjoyed were derived from the hope that some bright day or dark night I would balance old Van Camp's account, which was well secured and bearing compound interest.

“The summer after I was sixteen years old in May I grew like a rebellion in Mexico. Between the frosts of that year my avoirdupois, went from 110 to 155 pounds, and every ounce was muscle. My beard grew as heavy then as now, and much redder. Autumn came, and with it the rustic festivities common to country people, none of which I was permitted to attend on account of scanty wardrobe. At last my father's good qualities appeared to gain a temporary advantage over his habitual negligence of me. He abandoned his wonted record, went to the village, and bought me a fairly decent suit of clothes. They were as unexpected as my Chipmunk dividends have been, but their arrival was timely, for I didn't own tatters enough to shoo the flies out of a sugar-barrel; my wish for the possession of good clothes for my person had been so long deadened that, like a drowning person, I little thanked my rescuer. After a few days, I brought together courage enough to put on the 'store clothes.' A neighbor boy came by our house and told me there was to be a spelling-bee at a school-house some five miles distant, a prize to be given to the best speller. Knowing that I was 'long' on spelling, he urged me to go. I dressed in the new clothes that were so much too large

that I felt lonesome in them, and reached the little school-house in time to be chosen one of the spellers. The young man who gave out the words once taught in my neighborhood. I attended his school for a few weeks, but had now grown out of his memory; when told my name, however, he recollected me. We all stood while spelling, and when one had the bad luck to utter the wrong letters composing a word, it was followed by the good luck of getting a seat. In less than an hour they were all 'spelled down' but two—myself and a little crippled girl, perhaps fourteen years of age, who used a crutch in walking. We spelled alternately for ten or fifteen minutes; she finally missed the word 'pusillanimous,' spelling the second syllable 'cil' instead of 'sil.' I thought of old Van Camp instantly. There was no way on earth for me to miss that word. I had studied it day and night for four years. Many came to congratulate me, and the young teacher offered me the book, the prize, but I declined to accept it, and had them give it to the little crippled girl. It was a neatly bound copy of 'Æsop's Fables.' The sting of her disappointment was as effectually neutralized by the little volume as though she had been the victor in the contest. Her features brightened up, she thanked me politely for the gift, and had me write my name on one of the fly-leaves. I hurried home through the cold, thinking that my first appearance in public had at least gladdened one heart.

"That was a memorable night. The next spelling-bee I attended was the last one; it was at our own neighborhood school-house, about a week afterwards; then came the red lights, soft music, and the ring-down of the curtain on my mistreated boyhood.

"I was chosen, as before, to take part in the spelling, and it so happened that all contestants went down before the shot and shell of difficult orthography but myself and a daughter of old Van Camp. We amused the audience for some time;

by and by she put three *ts* in 'retribution'; the teacher passed it; I said, 'One *t* at the end of the first syllable is enough.' 'Correct,' said he, and declared me the winner.

"Quite a number of the grown-up folks were there—old Van Camp among them. The meeting adjourned, and all started their several ways homeward. As I passed over the steps at the front fence old Van Camp said to me in a scornful manner, 'You think you are smart, so you do, but I think you are a ——' He started on another word, but if he ever got it all uttered, it must have been three weeks or a month later, for I did land on him like a trip-hammer; all my dogs of war I let slip at one time, and with the fuse of his own lightning discharged the bombs of my pent-up wrath. His every act was a flagrant violation of my Monroe Doctrine. A fight was the only way left for me; it was a thousand times easier than to brook his insult, and was the course of least resistance; it was

'The road I long had sought,
And mourned because I found it not.'

Oh, how I did pump the stiff ones on him—'hip and thighs, mouth, nose, and eyes'! I've never seen an 'after-taking' face in patent medicine literature that in any way resembled his. A number of persons tried to pull me away from him, but they lacked strength. Someone kicked me on the shoulder; the blow shocked me some, and, unfortunately for old Van Camp, I swallowed a scruple of tobacco. The road to a man's heart is through his stomach, and the main-line trains bound for memory start on the same track, through that membraneous organ of digestion; for the very instant that nicotine fluid left my tongue all the physical and mental pangs I sustained four years previous through his treachery took forcible possession of my brain and crowded out every thought and contemplation but revenge. My desire went much farther than the punishment of his offense. I owed society a debt—not money or

goods, but service. I was now a man in everything but age; that I didn't need. I wanted to leave a mark of 'retribution' that would prevent other 'pusillanimous' scorpions like him from stinging innocent children. The kick from the unknown coward forced me on my side, my face near the left side of his head. I jerked him to me, his left ear touched my face. I opened my mouth wide, all his ear except the lower lobe went in, up went my under jaw, off went the cartilaginous funnel of his sound-receiver, and old Van Camp was branded with a letter found in the alphabet of all languages.

"Howe, you seem to stand for this talk so well that I'll let the jug run empty while the cork was out," said Mace as Howe recruited a cud of "fine cut."

"I had read or dreamed that if one does a little and does it well, then he has done a great deal. Satisfied with my spelling and sparring, I returned home—or, rather, to my father's house—all places of constant residence are not homes. None of the family had retired. My mother discovered my gory condition, and said my nose had been bleeding. I told her I doubted it. The rest of them observed my plight; I was deluged with questions, my father acting as leading counselor for the prosecution. I told him I had broken the portico above Van Camp's chop-house, and although not a doctor of dental surgery, I had extracted several pieces of furniture from his dining-room absolutely without pain—to me; as to him, I didn't know whether the operation hurt or not—I didn't inquire. My answers were not satisfactory, and some hot words passed between us; I hurried up the little stairs, took off the new suit of clothes, put on the best I could collect out of my every-day wearing apparel, and rushed down again.

"The Mace family began to treat as a reality the fact that they were now about to lose by emigration a very capable and diligent common laborer. Impulsively did they seek to stay

my steps; my father asserted with assurance that I would return within twenty-four hours—it has been much over twenty-four years and his prophecy is still unfulfilled; empty, light, and fruitless were their arguments, implorations and promises came to late. I took the bridle-bit of destiny between the same teeth that had lopped off old Van Camp's ear, and, with a determination conceived in vigilance and born in victory, without a kiss, good-bye, or even telling them to go to a warmer climate, braved the darkness of as cold a night as New England's November can produce.

“The walk from the door to the gate was steep, perhaps an elevation of twenty degrees; this gang-plank, beginning the voyage of my manhood's career, was the hardest pull I've had. But once through the yard gate, the road leveled up, and ever since life's burdens have grown immensely lighter.

“The history of that night's events occupies the stronghold of my memory. Few fledglings ever left the parental nest exercising dominion over as scanty a supply of valuable things. One more disheartened than I could have sung with the old colored mammy of the South:

‘The foxes have dens, and the birds have nests;
Poor sinner has no hiding-place.’

But I knew I wasn't a fox or a bird, and I didn't consider myself much of a sinner; therefore I wasn't looking for a hiding-place. The loveliest thing in that country to me was the road out of it; all I wanted with that part of this ‘terrestrial ball’ was to shake as much of it as possible off my ill-shod feet.

“By good daylight I had traveled upwards of twenty miles; the road got better all the while; walking didn't occupy all my mental activity, so I began to reckon an estimate in my own way—the respective amounts of bitter and sweet, profit and loss of human life; I knew then, as I do now, it was a stupendous proposition, but I tackled it nevertheless. I had

about completed my calculation and added together the several sums and products of my computations; it showed the sweets and profits somewhat in the minority; I reviewed the work, hoping to find some mistake; finding none, I concluded to postpone my accounting till conditions would produce a different result. It was perhaps half past nine o'clock—'quartering time,' as we say in a mining country. I was thirsty, very thirsty, and stopped at a farm-house. As I walked from the gate to the door I saw through the large front windows a glowing fire, costly furniture, and a number of well-dressed boys and girls, some of whom were almost grown. I knocked on the door; a middle-aged man came, opened the door, and asked me what was wanted. He looked at me hard with both eyes. I asked him if he'd give me a drink of water.

" 'No, sir,' came his reply in double-quick time. 'You are the third tatterdemalion and beggar we've had this morning. I work and support my family; other men must do likewise; I've nothing to give away—no, nothing.' His words were loud and high-pitched.

" 'Mister,' said I, 'you have my sincere sympathy. Scientists,' I continued, 'contend that there is no uniformity in nature; that no two things can be found precisely alike; your condition and mine convince me beyond doubt that they are in error. I myself have absolutely nothing to give away; our conditions are precisely similar.'

"My comparison caught him; his voice softened as he stepped out on the porch; I asked him to pardon my intrusion and turned to walk away. He told me to remain, adding that he would get the water at once, but I thanked him for the belated offer, and I told him I would not put him to the trouble, that I'd trudge along and drink at the next brook if it was not frozen over, as all I'd crossed had been. He followed me to the gate, persuading me all the while to remain and let him

give me the water; he begged me so earnestly that, once out in the road, I let him engage me in conversation. I remember well how he laid his hand on my shoulder; among other things, he said I was well built.

"I remarked to him: 'Yes, sir, you were right about not having anything to give away, but only half right in your other sweeping declaration about my being a tatterdemalion and beggar. I am a ragged fellow, but, my friend, you are the beggar, so you are, for you have asked and even pleaded with me a score of times to drink water, haven't you? Now you are the beggar, aren't you?'

"He made no reply to that, but looked dejected. I continued: 'Stranger, you work and support your family; that's laudable. Many men are good to all people but their families; that's damnable.'

" 'You talk more like an experienced man than the youth you be,' he said.

"I told him I had far more experience than most boys of sixteen years of age, and that I stood in greater need of water at that juncture than experience. This refreshed his memory of my request for a draught of that liquid, the most abundant and necessary in nature, and caused him to renew his solicitations for me to return and partake of water and food; I declined both, and resumed my journey; he besought me to take his hand in friendship, and hold no ill will toward him on account of his treatment, adding that he had a brother twenty years younger than himself somewhere in the wide world; it had been two years since he had heard from him; that his last letter contained an account of the scarcity of water in the northern part of Mexico (where he was then traveling), and that often a small drink was denied him.

"I took his hand and looked him straight in the eyes; they were filled with tears. I told him there was no necessity

for any conflict between us; he had a right to be inhospitable to strangers, and that I would forgive him and hold no grudge; that I would not treasure up in my memory the recollection of his treatment for future use, and should I ever meet his brother (which was not impossible) or anyone's brother suffering with thirst, I'd give unto him or unto them water or any other necessity, if within my ability to do so.

"I had gone perhaps forty rods before looking back; when I did, he was sitting on a stone beside the road, his head down, as if in deepest meditation. He must have been a good man, for he shed tears. I tell you, Howe, bad men don't weep much; tears are the true index of a noble heart. Sobs rarely convulse the bosoms of evil men. I'll bet more on a crying train-robber than on a dry-eyed parson.

"I know you are sleepy; here is a folding cot and a pair of blankets; I don't keep linen sheets; wool is Nature's raiment, it grows from flesh and blood; cotton, linen, and such stuffs are the products of the marsh, bog, and slime. Roll up in the blankets, and get your head on a level with your feet; never sleep with your head and shoulders higher than your body and lower limbs—it puts too much work on your heart. Good night, old boy; don't dream if you can help it. We do enough of that while we are awake."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mace was up two hours before Howe set sail to return from his moorage in the placid bay of dreamland, had fed his horses, shaved himself, put on clean clothing, and partially prepared a morning meal. By accident, he let fall the lid of his grub-box; the noise terminated Howe's nap. Bewildered by his surroundings at first, a second reflection cleared away all perplexity. Mace told him to prepare his toilet and give his order for breakfast; he didn't wait for another invitation. The tent accommodations excelled any boarding-house so completely that he didn't want to miss or overlook one jot of it.

After a good face and hands bath, and he was comfortably seated on one of the camp-stools, Mace said to him: "Howe, have you a watch?"

"Yes, sir. Why do you ask me?" said he.

"For several reasons," rejoined Mace; "one is, I want you to time me, and another, I don't want you to be governed by my timepiece; you might think mine was jockeying. And still another reason, I want to show you that I can get a good breakfast in five minutes; of course, this means cooking and placing on the table ready for the knife, fork, spoon, and teeth. Mind you, my gasoline stove is already burning (two burners) and our coffee is made. What time is it now by your Waterbury?"

"Four minutes past seven," said Howe.

"Good!" Mace cried out, and began at once the work, telling at the same time each and everything he was doing.

"These five slices of ham in this frying-pan merely covered with water till it boils. Eight pieces of bread buttered and on the hot griddle. Here we go, exactly; the water is boiling, I'll pour it out, then fry the ham. As the ham is getting hot

on one side I'll turn over the bread; yes—over it goes. Now for my fresh eggs, six—here they are; I'll break them in this bowl. All good—that's the way I like them; the whites stand up fine—eggs are addled if the whites flatten out much. Turn the ham over. Oh, my! that smells delicious; had I been a Jew in the wilderness, I'd certainly made manna-ham sandwiches, hog or no hog; yes, by gum! You will not scorch, Miss Toast, for you are done, taken up, and on the cake-plate. All right, little sugar-cured ham, you are cooked, and these eggs, disrobed of their white shells, will now plunge into the greasy incubator, rolling over, but failing to hatch. Gravy? Well, I should say so! I'll take up the eggs, let the pan get good and hot, pour in a half-pint of water with a spoonful of condensed milk, add this tablespoonful of flour, stir well, and pour all out into this little old-fashioned yellow bowl. Open this can of California peaches and this glass of honey for the hot' toast; all on the table, with two cups of hot coffee. 'Time?'. said Mace, motioning for Howe to move his tools to the table

"Four minutes and twenty-five seconds," said Howe.

"Right you are. I'm always four minutes slow on Sunday; ordinarily I'd box up a meal like this in the twenty-five seconds. Now then, let's see if we can eat it. Take the peaches first; fruit for breakfast always—it is gold in the morning, silver at noon, and lead at night. But hold! I'm too fast again; maybe you want to say something before eating—some people do. I wouldn't have you violate any obligation of your boyhood's faith while you're my guest. All I ask is for others not to crowd me out of the warm place of my own belief; they can have all the heaven they want as long as they don't give me hell."

Howe told him that while he still cherished the hope his parents taught him, he was like deaf Dan Brown when kicked by a tricky mule at the circus—he had nothing to say.

"Well," continued Mace, "I roughed it a part of one winter with old Ben Burton, as he was called, out in the Northwest. One morning old Ben asked a blessing that struck me as coming well up to the standard. The day before he and his two dogs fought a thirteen-round draw with a grizzly; one of the dogs and old Ben were all the survivors of the invading army. The other dog, his gun, ammunition, hunting accouterments, and most of old Ben's clothes were left on the field. I worked on him nearly all night with court plaster, stitches, and splints; next morning I cooked him some venison, bread, and coffee, and helped him to the board. He looked damaged. I'll never forget his looks and language. Rolling back his eyes and raising one hand, he said:

" 'Good Lord of love, look from above,
And pity our condition,
And please send down another hound,
With gun and ammunition.' "

"Howe, don't let me talk you out of your breakfast; light in on this, hammer and tongs—it will do you till you get home, where you can get something better."

Howe hadn't been as hungry since he was weaned. Like all lawyers, he needed very little encouragement to claim what was coming; the way he did eat was a sight. After three whole and four half-cups of coffee had trickled over his tongue, he requested Mace to look at an almanac and see when he would be full, adding that he was by the table as by the "mourners' bench"—always stayed till he felt a change.

"Mace, tell me," Howe inquired, as he sipped the remains of the aromatic Java from the lees of the last half-cup, "was old Ben's prayer answered?"

"Well, I can't say as to that; at any rate, the supplies he sought were soon forthcoming. That afternoon the missing hound wobbled in, looking like he'd gone through a steam

crusher; a benevolent neighbor about five miles up the gulch gave him a new repeating rifle, and I bought him five dollars' worth of cartridges; something like a week afterwards someone found his hunting-knife. It began to look like old Ben's supplicating telegram had ticked off the far end of a through wire. He called his battle with the bear a thirteen-round fight for the day in December it occurred. Like many others, he regarded that number as quite unlucky, and I'm free to confess that I share the same belief; I'd set up four whole nights before I'd doze three seconds in a room numbered thirteen of anybody's tavern. This may sound silly to you, but if you ever owe me thirteen dollars, twelve will pay the debt, and I'll give you a receipt for all time to come and three days of grace thrown in.

"Ben was an uncommon character. He's got the best suite of rooms in the mansion of my memory. I've never taken the crape off their front door, and seldom show anyone through them, but never a day goes by that I don't go in and dig up some of his witty or pathetic expressions. He used to say that he was born in eastern Kentucky when he was small and owned 'most all the western part of the State before he left there; but, like many other lovesick furrow-walkers, mortgages and marriage licenses had fouled him, and that this world, so far as he'd seen, possessed very few attractions calculated to make a man right 'shouting happy' for any great length of time; said he could see in the dark of the moon where Davy Crockett was right in quitting Congress and going back to bear-hunting—anybody's got a right to reform. Our so-called civilization had soured in old Ben's digestive track, and, like a puling infant, he'd spewed it up. Many years before he'd married; but the one he solemnly promised 'to love and none other' hadn't an idea, thought, feeling, or sentiment in common with him. She regarded wifedom as a trick, a scheme

of false pretenses. Old Ben knew nothing but common honesty, and looked upon marriage as a field of well-watered clover. Both lost out; they've got company, other necks are in the same noose. His married life was the same old shelf-worn tale; it's been told time out of mind, and is the main story-post in the edifice of the pessimist—perfidy, bad faith. Some slick-tongued machine agent had created the impression on her that old Ben was too coarse and uncouth, that he didn't shave often enough, needed high-priced perfumery to counteract the odor of his perspiration, and other things equally as unimportant. Open and bare-faced villainy seldom needs weighty excuses to justify its acts, and a biased wife is surely not well qualified to determine all the rights of her husband. A little mound in the corner of their front yard (covered with Nature's verdant carpet, made famous by that old commonwealth) represented the last resting-place of their only child, a little seven-year-old girl.

“Well, the agent's tongue outran his machines, and one thirteenth day of April, at high noon, old Ben returned from the field and found that his erstwhile wife had left for parts unknown; all her wearing apparel and jewelry was likewise missing, which set at rest any suspicion of suicide or foul play. The garments of the little buried girl remained, and one of these little silken dresses (made in the style of ante-bellum days) Ben kept till the day of his death. I want to tell you, Howe, there are oceans of love in the garments of a dead friend; yes, sir, I know it.

“Poor old Ben! that was his last fight, his last match with Fate. Spring came; the distended buds put forth their exuberant foliage; the milk-white snow melted and swelled to brimming fullness the mountain brooks; the fluttering wing of the vigilant ruffled grouse in flight from the rapaciousness of the plundering wolf—all came in their time and season, but

Ben was chronicled an absentee. One night in January he beckoned me to his couch, and said he was about to complete the voyage from birth to burial. I moistened his lips with snow-water, and caught his feeble expressions requesting me to lay the little silken dress with him, and put plenty of stone on the grave to prevent the wolves from disturbing his last claim. He regretted much the bodily exertion and weariness he'd put me to on account of his approaching death at that time of the year, and preferred cremation rather than go into the cavernous earth, were it not that he wanted to sleep with the little cherished garment.

“And so it happened, on the thirteenth day of January, his pulse grew weaker and weaker; he ceased to speak; we had poor nourishments, and I couldn't get him to eat. I sat by him all the night previous; he was going, but intensely slow, and I thought with much pain and suffering. He pointed repeatedly into the fireplace, but I failed to understand. I gave him a steel ramrod; he held it feebly, pointed to a charred coal, and made signs for me to give it to him; I did so; he then pointed to my cake-board; I gave him that also; he wrote with the coal on the board: ‘I'll be easy soon. Please don't forget my baby's dress.’ Thus the blessed creature that had lived in his memory for years and years, nurtured and cherished as a tender and rare plant, was the last image on the mental stage of old Ben's earthly pilgrimage.

“The neighbor who gave him the rifle kindly assisted me in placing his remains in the rude sepulchre I'd made nearer the cabin door in the frozen ground. As we lowered him down to his real and undisputed home I spoke, as though addressing a multitude: ‘I'll be easy soon. Please don't forget my baby's dress.’ I placed the cake-board bearing his self-written epitaph as an improvised monument at the head of his grave, and the precious little gown was not forgotten, every fiber of which

has long since resolved itself once more to earth above the mouldering heart of him whose grief-stricken mind cherished it as the most sacred idol of his life."

Mace's words lingered in Howe's ears as the last detonating peal of thunder loiters in the rear of an electric storm in spring-time. Both men found something to engross their attention; the burdensome silence was broken by Mace raising his trunk-lid and taking out a handkerchief, and the young lawyer folded the cot and moved it to the corner of the tent.

In a furnished room adjoining his office that Sabbath afternoon lonesome and meditative sat Howe, trying to repeat some of Mace's aphorisms and reassemble in mental miniature his serio-comic actors. He could see the little crippled girl straining her memory violently to win the prize that Fate was going to award another, and the change from chagrin to ecstasy when the unselfish Mace voluntarily made her the winner. He could see old Van Camp's hair combed down to hide his maimed ear, and the contrite and penitent farmer who refused the Yankee lad a few swallows of water.

None of Mace's characters stood out in such bold relief as did old Ben Burton. "Poor, poor man!" murmured Howe; "the per cent was against him, but he finally beat the hazardous game of life—by not playing at it."

CHAPTER IX.

For weeks and weeks the output from the Chipmunk headed the list for the entire district. The ore was the best and the prices received therefor were the highest. Before the mine had celebrated its first anniversary, it was known that it had cleared over four hundred thousand dollars, and showed no signs of exhaustion or "blindness."

The owners were still comparative strangers to each other and seldom met, except to divide the net proceeds of a week's sales. Mining brokers and buyers kept flocking to the Chipmunk with incessant frequency and importuning the owners to set some price on the property, which they firmly and resolutely refused to do; always saying that if it was regarded as a good investment for capitalists, by keeping it long enough they would become capitalists themselves.

The weekly profits continued to run from five to eight thousand dollars. All their employees received the highest prices paid for similar work in the district, with two dollars additional per week for each man, regardless of his station, rank, or duties. The money was paid every Saturday night and was placed in an envelope with each man's name written thereon, below which was printed in bold type, "Look everyone straight in the face," and signed below, "Yours with respect, The Chipmunk Mining Company, by Melvin Mace, President."

As might have been expected, the company had no trouble with their laborers. There was never one word about strikes, grievance committees, lockouts, boycotts, or black lists. The oldest and most experienced men in the whole district said they had never seen as little friction in the management of as large an enterprise; a pay-roll exceeding one thousand dollars per week, and not one harsh word, look, or thought from any source;

such actions and dealings of mankind approached the super human.

Ole's significant remark showed what he thought of their men: "Ay tank wa got bes bys Ay haver see."

"Oh, no," Mace replied; "our boys are no better than other miners and laboring men throughout the country. We understand them and they understand us better than other men do."

"What yo mane understan—understan?"

"I mean they know us and we know them better than other mine-owners know their workmen."

"Yes, yes," said Ole, "Ay no ow bys, Ay shake da hans."

He evidently meant he was friendly with their men and would shake hands with all of them as a token of his friendship, which time-honored salutation, whether upon the lichen-covered crags of Scandinavia's frigid peninsula, or in the lamp-lighted caverns of an American mine, when offered from an unpretending and honest heart, has ever been the proof of true friendship.

At last the Tuesday came that made the first annual landmark in the life of the Chipmunk. The men were notified that the next day would be a holiday, but their pay would go on just the same. A full week's pay was in each envelope Saturday night, but instead of two dollars extra, that amount was increased to five dollars, and on the envelope (just below the admonition about looking people in the face, in similar letters) was printed the sentence, "We see your two and elevate you three better; hope you'll stand the raise."

The quality of ore increased in fineness as its face in the drifts thickened.

We have heretofore neglected to say that among the things possessed by Mace, other than his great physical strength, his cheerful disposition, and unselfish habits, he had

a large and extraordinarily valuable fund of wagon-horse sense, with which he was as liberal as the circumstances of each case might require, and when short on experience, he drew on his wisdom (the horse sense), and the drafts were seldom protested.

Hard hits and big blasts were disturbing the quietude of the majestic spider and undermining his very throne, upon which royal seat he had sat from unremembered time, and beheld with regal eyes the dawn and doom of unenumerated eras.

There is a something well known to many men that has long been regarded as the dispatch-bearer of evil tidings; whether best to denominate it premonition, presentiment, clairvoyance, or "hunches," as it is called by many other gents, we know not; it is enough here to say that Mace was well tinctured with the belief in this indescribable something. The weather was never too severe or business too urgent for him to pass a horseshoe in the road unnoticed. He would invariably stop and examine it minutely; if it had no more than two nails, he would take it with him and nail it to the first forest tree he came to, provided the tree was of a species that produced no nuts or fruit, such as elm, dog-wood, and the like; always using the nails in the shoe to fasten it to the tree. When twitted by anyone for what they would usually call his silly fancies, he would very argumentatively tell them they were at liberty to disbelieve it. Sometimes he would add: "There's nothing in belief; your belief that kraut is unwholesome doesn't make it taste bad to a Hollander. Both armies at Bull Run believed they would win; Napoleon believed he would capture Moscow and subdue the Russian Empire, Josephine believed he wouldn't. Now you have it; humming-bird and alligator hatched from the same egg; two blacks make one white; two wrongs make one right; the jury will please retire and bring in their verdict." In this way he would answer

his upbraiders, not with a desire to foment a discussion, but actuated by the hope that he might persuade men to do their own thinking; which, after all, is the only avenue that leads to success, be it called presentiment, prognostics, or "hunches."

One of Mace's indispensable pieces of furniture was a small Franklin stove he had owned for many winters; he had it well mounted, and always ready for fuel, and during damp or rainy spells in the summertime this little portable fireplace in his tent could be seen at evenings, ever aglow with the cheerful fagots' blaze.

He was a constant reader, and when not at work spent almost every moment of his time with books and newspapers. About one month after the Chipmunk's first anniversary there was a long spell of cold, damp, and drizzly weather. The sales of ore increased beyond the limit of any previous figure, and as a producer it stood unequaled.

Mace spent his evenings as usual, reading, and the evening now referred to he was perusing a new novel; it was a story of Western life, and was especially interesting to him on account of his having seen many of the places therein mentioned. An honest and confiding old farmer and his (best of all friends) faithful wife, who had worked themselves deformed trying to leave a competency to three daughters, the wives of Messrs. Little, Doolittle, and Doless, had just signed and acknowledged a negotiable note and mortgage deed for one thousand six hundred dollars on their small farm to secure the first shipment of eight hundred "Little Jewel" labor-savers, which was a patent rubber milk extractor, strainer, cream separator, and operator's reclining chair, that was guaranteed *in writing* to practically and permanently abolish the occupation of the milkmaid. The oily-tongued confidence-man had explained in detail, showing how it would take hold of a cow's udder and in less than two minutes drain it to emptiness, separating the milk

and cream at the same time. He and his notary were about to depart, when up rode a deputy sheriff from an adjoining county (where the same game had been worked), arrested and put both in irons, compelling him to give back the papers, and explaining to the old gentleman that there was no such machine; that his design was to sell the note to some county-seat banker, who in the end would have owned the little tillage-plot, while he and his motherly old wife would have been hobbling down the unpaved path from the poor-house to the potter's field.

"Mud and mineral mixed," said Mace, "with the mineral slightly predominant; in 'most all grain there is some chaff."

He was gaping lustily, betokening an admonition of drowsiness; he trimmed the fire and put on another piece of wood. The bonny blaze mounted higher than usual and set fire to the soot on the back wall of the stove. It defined in its minute blaze the most unimagined forms and objects. He beheld with much interest its odd and irregular capers, shifting from the real to the phantasmical and back again to the actual. Soon the most mysterious and enigmatic features of the little phantom were cleared away. He saw the little *s* appear in Spencerian plainness, followed by *e* and *l*. "Sell," said he; "they are talking to me, they are talking to me." And that all-important word in the business world stood a pillar of fire before him till morn. He enjoyed the sweet repose of honest and well-earned slumber, but in his dreams he learned an abbreviated alphabet, composed of the letters *s-e-l-l*; and so in his dozing thoughts, not under command of reason, this ocular spectrum stood a visible form and image until his rested lids, buoyed by the lightness from the downy bosom of Morpheus, opened to his eager eyes the splendor of another dawn.

He informed Ole early that this was to be his first day off duty since he commenced work at the Chipmunk. The gloomy

spell of weather had passed into history; by their incessant flaps, the tireless wings of the morn had borne the tumbled cloud domes high up and over the flint-covered water-sheds of the Ozarks.

Two hours later one could have seen a buggy approach Mrs. Long's house (which had been enlarged by the addition of five good rooms since the cloudy Monday). Mace and Bruce alighted therefrom and went inside. Easy would have been the task, to one acquainted with Mace's ideas of internal impressions and forebodings, to have told the reason that prompted a consultation among the Chipmunk's owners. Every phase and feature of their property was discussed, *pro* and *con*. The conversation was started by Mace reading half a dozen or more telegrams from parties making cash offers, the last of which was from New York city, and was an unconditional offer of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the mine and the machinery; this did not include the uncrushed ore already hoisted, commonly called the "clean-up," probably fifteen thousand dollars' worth, and twenty days were given to crush, clean, and market it (the "clean-up") if the offer was accepted. Mrs. Long's cottage presented a vastly different appearance than on the day, more than one year past, when Mace and Howe drove to it through the fog. One of the five new rooms was a tasty and elaborately furnished little parlor, in which the deliberations of the partners were begun; but before a conclusion was reached, Mace offered the suggestion that they adjourn and conclude their discussion in the little room that was the council-hall of such fruitful results. In this apartment (once called by Mrs. Long the "miserable hovel," where she kept her "little brood," and now used only to store away unused furniture), Mace resumed his remarks.

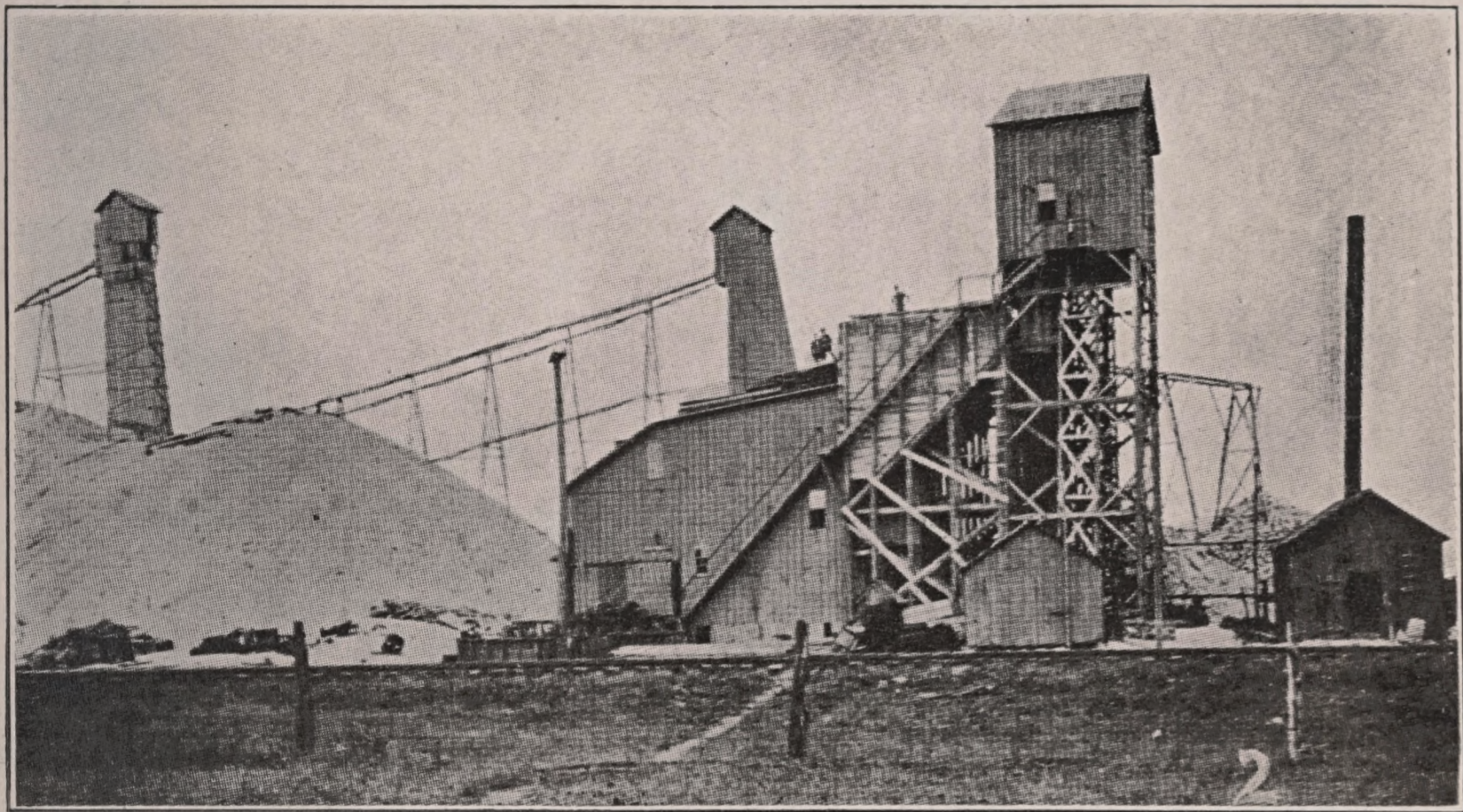
"It occurred to me that we've already made some money out of the Chipmunk. The amount cleared above all ex-

penses up till last Saturday night is very close to the half-million-dollar mark. I will not presume to say or contend that we might not have done better under some other management, and I'll say we might have done worse. Now, If I understand the object, aim, and intent of this mining by us—in fact, any hard work, it is solely for the purpose of making money, and not for health, sanitation, and exercise; and should we accept this offer,” pointing to the New York telegram, “one would be remarkably short-sighted who fails to see that we are making good easy money, and that without risk or hazard, which in mining ventures are perhaps greater than in any other calling. Another fact within easy memory is, that we've had no serious accidents or fatalities, and only one casualty—‘Joe-Joe’s’ dislocated shoulder, that costing us in wages, doctor bills, and cash paid him nine hundred dollars. An evil day may come and sweep away much of our profits in the destructive waves of litigation. Again, there could be such a thing as our taking the mineral all out—but I'll not attempt to enumerate the many ways by which we could be plunged into failure. I prefer to point out one road to success, and that is to sell, and sell here and now. Have either of you anything to suggest?”

Bruce, who had ever been against selling at any price, was the first to speak. His exact language was: “A change has come over the spirit of my dreams. I once thought there was some pleasure in making money; I don't think so now; the only real happiness that can be had with coin and currency is in spending it. Mace's remarks remind me of another unmentioned reason for selling—the price of ore may go down and down, and stay down. Thermometers are the only commercial article that one can safely guarantee to go up, and I've seen a frigid market make them descend. There is more in knowing *when* than *how* to trade. Those New York folks evi-

dently want the Chipmunk; we may be selling them ten million dollars and may be only the ribbed skeleton of the big spider; no one knows; no one can see farther into the earth than a pick's point. Early in life I became wedded to the adage, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' I'd like now to sell my interest in the Chipmunk, and celebrate my golden marriage, as soon as possible, to that incontrovertible truism."

A ballot was spread, which resulted in a unanimous verdict for the sale, and Mace was instructed to wire the New Yorkers that they had bought a lead and zinc mine.



THE CHIPMUNK MINE

CHAPTER X.

Two hundred thousand dollars to an American multimillionaire may be a trifle, mere pocket change, to lavish on titular sons-in-law, or tickle the palm of a jewel-fingered alimony fiend, whose modest claims "the court further finds to be in keeping with her rank and station in life, and consistent with the defendant's ability to meet and pay"; but that sum in the hands of a widow with four small children, far away from home, friends, or relatives, is quite a nice little collection.

Mrs. Long regarded it her plain duty to employ Howe to manage and control her financial affairs; hence authority was given him to buy, sell, and loan or otherwise invest her funds in such manner as he deemed to her advantage. This he did by lending on real-estate security, mostly to young men just beginning the ever-arduous undertaking of providing themselves a home. Some choice inside properties in the zinc metropolis were bought and improved, together with a modern suburban residence to be occupied by herself and children. All of which netted her an income sufficient to exclude every insidious approach of want in any form.

Oh, how differently the world treats you after you get money, whether you spend it or not! None ask *how* you got it, *where* you got it, or *when* you got it; no, no, they never tax your time or patience with such weak and witless questions; only one interrogatory they propound: "*Have* you got it?"

This money-worshipping contagion defies the surgeon's knife, the apothecary's drug, and the nurse's tender treatment; no gland can coop up its malignant germs, and no quarantine station or pest-house hold or restrain its multitudinous victims, who are scarred and pitted so plainly that one good look is a complete reading—flattering, cringing, fawning, bend the knee,

lift the tile, curl the lip, and smile at and in the presence of one who has or is supposed to have money.

So it developed that folks who once would not have recognized Mrs. Long or her little ones, or even admitted that she had a valid excuse for existing anywhere on the face of the earth, now surged, pushed, fell over each other and swooned, for an opportunity to do her some favor or din into her ears unstinted praise of the beauty and attractiveness of her children.

Heck Bruce kept on blacksmithing. He would say sometimes to an old friend: "I 'low it'll take more'n two hundred thousand dollars to make me live some other man's life; and my trade is as much a part of myself as my bones, and more'n my muscles, for I got it first."

Scores and scores of men stopped at the shop (a small two-forge affair with a wood-workman annex) who had not been close to one since they helped fire anvils in the early morning of some glorious Fourth of July in boyhood, and ladies in silks and fine linens called to ascertain if Mr. Bruce repaired eight-day clocks or sewing-machines or helped to put up stoves. He had three calls for Bologna sausage in one day—and they were "on the square" too, and the work he got to do was a sight; he was from three to six weeks behind always, besides sending plenty of work to every shop he knew of; he would look at the whole barge-load of repair-work on hand, and say to his helper:

"Oh gosh dang! but they all love to bring swill to a fat hog; time was when I'd 'a' run a horse-race through a Louisiana swamp without track or training for a small part of all this work. And prices—just think! I charged a dry-land sucker two dollars and seventy-five cents for repair-work on a buggy (had him leave it, of course); think I was about a minute and seven seconds on the job; hoped I'd get shut of him, but no—

he's brought back two jobs since; I'll raise him like a drunken cowboy with a pat flush.

"Blow her long and hard, Ike," he said to his helper; "I don't want to make the iron hot with the hammer, it is easy done with the bellows. The man I learned the trade with often said there never was but two blacksmiths went to hell—one for not charging enough for his work and the other for pounding cold steel."

"Bruce, don't you think that this hell business is a by-word?" said Ike, as he almost lifted himself off the floor contracting the huge bellows.

"It's *by* with me, and has been for many years; I'm 'stonished that the whole thinking world don't call a halt and demand a reckoning," said Bruce; "and they would, too, if a majority of them weren't running for office all the time. You see, when a fellow runs for office, no matter which party nominates him, he's always on a platform that 'reaffirms its devotion to time-honored principles' or 'points with pride to the illustrious achievements of his party in the past,' and so on, and so on.

"And there is the little one-syllable school-teacher to contend with, just teaching 'dog' in the forenoon and 'cat' after dinner—and hell all the time to hold his forty-dollars-a-month job. And the clergy—oh, my! oh my! what is there to it? But it'll finally get cooled off and smoothed down or glossed over. The higher critics are cutting it out; it takes lots of muscle and borax to weld it to anything that looks reasonable.

"I'll tell you, Ike," Bruce continued, "the seeds of a brighter and better belief are now slumbering beneath the dead weight of a high-priced superstition, but the April showers of the future will finally reach them, and the searching rays of an ever-wakeful sun will breathe into their little baby nostrils the breath of life—not death or damnation, but *life*. We

need no punishment after death, nor threats of it while living. Suffering is in the flesh, not in the grave. Why, if I was mad enough to take one by the feet and feed him to a crusher, I wouldn't send him to a hell of fire ten seconds, not for the warranty deed to a well-improved earth. Ike, where were you raised?"

"I wasn't raised at all," Ike rejoined; "they just throwed over feed to me and I growed up. I was born in Arkansas; my mother died when I was two months old; my father married again before her tracks were out of the door-yard; we all moved to Texas when I was a yearling, and about all the raising I got was on the hurricane-deck of a mustang pony between Red River and the Rio Grande. Six years ago my saddle-horse stepped in a prairie-dog hole, I fell off, and the horse on me; broke my left knee and it has been stiff ever since. Of course I couldn't ride, and that event sent me to the scrap-pile, like any other broken cog. I concluded I'd ruther be a maverick than a hobo. So I strayed off here to the zinc mines, thinking that the weeks might have some other days in 'em 'sides Friday."

"So you say you was a cowboy for a while?"

"Yes, a little while—twenty-five years."

"Did you ever drink any whisky?"

"Well, I never fooled my money away for bread; that was too long a road; I always took a nigh shoot."

"By jing! Ike, you tell it well. Gambled too, I suppose?"

"Went all the gaits known to the track," said Ike; "but that gambling is the most dangerous in the whole record of racing."

"Except pride, Ike, except pride; that's the worst range of rocks in the reef. When pride builds a house, the family is out of doors; when it buys a carriage, they soon have to walk; and when it clothes the children, it disrobes the parents; it's

the most bitter ingredient in the whole cup of human misery; nine-tenths of the people would be thrifty and comfortable if it weren't for pride in some form."

The two men talked on in this vein, comparing experiences and contrasting dangerous incidents in their own careers. Bruce told Ike all about his luck in the Chipmunk; about its development, sale, etc.; that Melvin Mace, the controlling spirit of the enterprise, had recently left the zinc district and gone somewhere in the South.

Their conversation was frequently interrupted by persons in a great rush. Bruce never failed to tell them it would be two weeks before he could reach the job, possibly three; still the rusher could leave it, seeming to forget his undue eagerness and the indispensability of the article sought to be repaired.

This was the end of Ike's fifth week as a helper in Bruce's employ; he made no profession of mechanical genius, nor to the art of making, fashioning, or constructing metallic or wooden substances; all he knew was picked up on a cattle ranch—shoeing saddle-horses, repairing Winchesters and revolvers, but he was always in the absolute and undisputed possession of an entire willingness to undertake anything. He never said, "I can't," or that this or that or the other was impossible; these sentences were foreign to his vocabulary. And although he had never heard of the Chipmunk Mining Company's rules, he looked everyone square in the face. He once told Bruce that when he saw a man who wouldn't look you in the face, he thought he was ashamed of himself or (like a mule) ashamed of his father or his family.

The days and months came and went; steam plants blew the whistles with uninterrupted regularity; the children of men laughed, struggled, grieved, and died; the vicissitudes of life left ineffaceable traces and deep-cut furrows on brain and body. Mother Earth continued to enforce her inexorable decree to be oftentimes drenched with blood and tears. And Father Time, "relentless in his ire," with keen-bladed scythe mowed down his quivering human swath, ever insensible to all distress, pausing only to point the wicked cutlass to the dial-plate of the everlasting calendar, disclosing to all animate things his endless calling—execution.

CHAPTER XI.

Seven years had passed since the Chipmunk's sale. Many fortunes had been made and lost in the district; new and useful processes had been discovered and evolved for cleaning, separating, treating, and smelting zinc ore.

Mrs. Long during this time had been filling the place of father, mother, governess, and tutoress for her children. Over and often had they been told their family history, as well as she herself knew it, and many were the acts of kindness and benevolence that she bestowed upon the needy and unfortunate.

It was an unalterable rule in her home never to turn away the really distressed, no matter the cause of the grief or adversity. Her generosity was often imposed upon by professional tramps, whose make-believe blistered arms, covered with vaseline, procured for them a whole ticket to her bounty.

The daughters grew handsomer every day. They didn't giggle or chew gum, and they used the word "very" instead of "awful" or "awfully." Everyone conceded them to be by far the most beautiful girls in the town.

Quita was a grown young lady now, past seventeen; willowy, graceful, blithe. Her bearing added more and more to her excellence; a wealth of raven hair, ornate and lovely, the same big baby brown eyes, rosy lips, and cheeks with the crimson hue that autumn paints the maple leaves. Nor had her native beauty detracted one point from her intellectual accomplishments. She played and sang and declaimed well, besides being quite proficient in painting, drawing, and crocheting; but above and by far beyond all (if necessary), she could go into the kitchen and prepare a meal that the most fastidious could chew and swallow without gastric disturbances, and this woefully neglected attainment was her chief pride.

Hard indeed would it be to overstock the world with her like, and harder still is it to understand their scarcity in the face of an unlimited demand. There was never a social gathering to which she did not receive a pressing invitation to attend; every one, however, was submitted to her mother, and if she dissented, the request was declined with regrets.

The particulars of these events would be incomplete were not Mrs. Long's other children described at greater length.

"Seven years of plenty" had wrought a mighty change with Faula and Luling. The Chipmunk's big dividends, no doubt, contributed more to their development than any other factor; still they possessed by nature so many of the elements of ladylike greatness that even abject poverty could not have wholly deadened. From little round-faced tots, they too were fast approaching womanhood; they were coy, reserved, modest, and withal good-looking and witty. Little Cub was a favorite far and near; the larger he became the more closely he resembled the mother.

Mrs. Long had repeatedly narrated to the children the success of the Chipmunk, and that the day Mace and Howe came to their little lonely dwelling on the common was the datemark of their delivery from destitution. It was late in the afternoon, a cold Saturday in the middle of December; the north wind blew cutting blasts that howled in mornful cadences through treetops and crevices, foreteaching in its melodramatic serenade the inclemency of the approaching night. Feather-like flakes of snow spat upon the face of Earth like unruly children, heeding not that their short-lived fury would terminate in self-destruction; ditches and drainage channels were bank-full of snow-broth, and along their sludgy edges it was fast forming into murky ice.

Mrs. Long and her children were already buying, making, and collecting together their holiday presents for the approach-

ing Christmas. All the children were at home on this afternoon, and, contrary to their wont, were exceedingly quiet; so much so that their reservedness had elicited more than one comment from their mother.

"Now that's finished at last," said Quita, as she folded and placed in a little box a beautiful white garment.

"That's a silk wrap for 'Colorado Chris's' baby girl; she is near six months old now, and they have named her for her mamma. I saw her last week. Oh, she is a sweet little July peach! And this box is for 'Mrs. Slim' and her two children. Say, Faula, what is 'Mrs. Slim's' right name?"

"It's De Graffenried. Sister, I thought you were good at recollecting names."

"Not very, when they are as long as that."

"Well, he is a long man."

"So he is," replied Quita, "and these presents will not shorten him any or his purse either, but they'll make 'Mrs. Slim' feel almost as lengthy as her husband; it's a full suit for both the children and a fur cape for their mother. I've a notion to write her a note and tell her that 'Davy Crocket' furnished the peltry to make this cape when he worked at the Chipmunk. He never got through telling of the wild beasts he'd slain and the valuable furs marketed. Mr. Mace said he was not only 'the man who struck Billy Patterson,' but he was also the one who ruthlessly killed all the buffaloes of the West, thereby compelling the Indians to make peace with the Government, that has fed them tenderloin and porterhouse ever since; it looked like poor 'Lo' just 'gold-bricked' Uncle Sam through 'Davy's' huntsmanship."

"Folks call that 'double-crossing' in selling mines," Faula added.

"That's quite as appropriate," Quita rejoined; "I reckon Mr. Indian just crossed into the reservation, and the Gov-

ernment doubled the rations. Oh, well! I'll not write it, for 'Davy' is about to get married."

"Going to fish instead of hunt," observed the mother.

"I suppose so, mother; you know it's easier to dig bait than lead."

"Yes, and easier to carry."

"Not so easy for the fish," said Quita; and added, "I'll just send a combination hat-rack to 'Davy,' and he'll have a place to hang his fish."

In like manner were each and all the men who had worked at the Chipmunk (when Mrs. Long owned an interest in it) remembered with an appropriate offering. So were Howe, Bruce, White, and Ike, the helper, presented with some attractive gift, suitable and in keeping with established usage among those able and inclined to make such bestowals.

But alas! alack! one there was in space somewhere who could only be reached with good wishes, good recollections, and earnest hopes. He the little New Englander who leveled the organs of his vision and ocular knowledge square at the countenance of all mankind; he who seven years previous had assured the bereaved widow that his mission was not mischief and that he had no desire or design to hurt or harm. This one, the procuring cause of her abundance, was far away and, for aught they knew, beyond the compass of communication.

Twice blessed be they who love to give. Happy indeed these folks could they have transmitted to him some memento of their gratitude, and happier still to have known that he, their unselfish benefactor, was prosperous and contented. O Gratitude, virtue of highest excellence, make your permanent home among the children of men. Go into the cells and disks of babies' brains before the craniums enclosing them harden, and there upon infantile thrones establish yourself, and constitute a part and parcel of their little selves; permit not the legionary forces of Unthankfulness to ever divest you of sovereignty or tarnish the dignity of your high office with the lowest of all iniquities—ungratefulness.

CHAPTER XII.

The ensuing winter will long be remembered as one of extraordinary severity. At least two-thirds of the mining plants were shut down till spring. There were a few deaths, some births, and scarcely marriages enough to speak of.

"Davy Crockett's" wedding took place in January. "Davy's" real name was Silas Whitlow; he married a Miss Angie McLudd, whose father was from that part of Ireland where the inhabitants are extremely hard to curry, and whose descendants are classified in America and Australia from featherweights on up.

The mutual affection and fidelity of their union terminated with a flaxen-haired baby boy and a divorce case. "Squire" McGuire said the next day after the wedding that the McLudd family would not lose anything by giving Angie to "Davy," unless he ("Davy") took a notion to give her back sometime, which he did, with one hundred per cent interest. But Angie turned the disastrous voyage of her first venture to good account, and put into operation that old truthful maxim, "Better be an old man's dearly beloved darling than a young man's bounden slave." She married soon after a wealthy bachelor of over fifty years (and more than double that many thousand dollars), from Montana. He, Angie, and the flaxen-haired fosterling spent the winters in Florida, the summers in the metropolis of the bi-State zinc district, and quite a quantity of the Montana coin at both places.

The last time the writer saw "Davy" he was comfortably located on a leather-bottomed chair in a Joplin pool-hall, earnestly seeking to create the impression that Ground-hog Day was the fourteenth and not the second day of February.

Austere Winter finally concluded his frigid labor, and gar-

landed Spring gamboled in upon the stage, supported in her cheerfulness with mirth-inspired actors, festooned in keeping with the cast.

The flitting wren chattered her inarticulate notes as if every preceding cadence had been encored by her delighted audience, whose appreciation prompted her to repeat again and again the choicest selections acquired by the little migratory songster in some far-away Southern conservatory.

The dark-gowned fluttering swallow balanced in mid air on somber wings and peered down into the sooty passages as if to learn if Winter lingered yet. Lusterless little chimney-sweep, Nature made you not in vain, for in the eternal fitness of animated things all the features of your occupation find ample warrant. Come back, insectiferous little airship; speed, alone, justifies your existence; build cosy waxen-glued homes in the deserted tenement of smoke, and there, in its obscure and gloomy track, where none but Santa Claus and you make bold to enter, hover, nurture, and educate your tiny sons and daughters; there in dusky-lined flues teach them the geography of two zones, the orthoëpy of swallow language, the philosophy of bird life, and that much-sought and some-time-to-be art—*aërial navigation*.

The gregarious crows, *en route* to the productive husbandry of the North, lurked in unfrequented corners. Oft the young and lean-witted would smuggle the last egg from coop or mow, while the more skillful stood sentinel in an aged elm's denuded arms, and with jetty eyes cast cunning glances at whatever resembled a gun-barrel.

Vegetable as well as animal life was now asserting its temporary title to earth's occupancy with all its elastic power and force. The lowlands spread far and wide their native greenery, and hilly eminences held mammal-like to their round bosoms the promising buds and blades.

A glaring stream of lightning from a clear sky would have been as much expected as Melvin Mace at the home of Mrs. Long, but human history is a record of unexpectedness and unthought-of, even undreamed-of transactions and events crowd to fullness the paged annals of the past.

It was Mace, and no mistake; the same form, the same voice, the same look—that look that no real rational person could easily forget; pert, active, erect, and still guiding his pupils straight toward all mankind.

“No, I’ve not changed much; only my hair has whitened. Thirty years of hard work is enough to bleach anything.”

“Do you still live in your tents?” Mrs. Long asked.

“Yes, and I’ve been remarkably healthy for several years until about six months ago I got into the Southern swamps; I didn’t feel so well there. I told a druggist I had something like a chill. He said it was a chill, for there was nothing like them. I attended a wedding the first week after I went there. An old motherly lady came and tapped me on the shoulder and said: ‘My good man, if the crime you committed in Missouri was not too bad, for heaven’s sake take your rosy cheeks back there and stand trial, even if you plead guilty and throw yourself on the mercy of the court.’ ”

* * * * *

“Oh! quite well I remember them—that is, their names; they’ve grown so I’d never have recognized them. Let’s see—the baby’s name is Cub—and this is he; well, how he has grown! Shake, old boy—plumb back to the coat-sleeve, no little cold-fingered jerk—that’s the stuff; he’s a little man. The girls, I’ll never forget them; the Chipmunk miners once thought they were mine, and the compliment has been a comfort to me ever since. I have a boy now of my own.

“Indeed,” said Mrs. Long, thinking Melvin had married during his long trip. “Rather small, I suppose?”

"Not so very small; he's nineteen years old, and weighs in the same scale-notch with me; he's a combination of more good qualities than any lad I've ever met."

Answering Faula's question, Mace continued: "I've seen 'most all the old Chipmunk men since I came back; knew all of them at sight. Ole's full-bearded face came nearer fooling me than any of them, but when he spoke, the mistake was all over: 'Malva, Ay use git mard sin oo bane way.' I congratulated him earnestly; found out, however, that I was late about expressing my pleasure at his good fortune, as he's been married three years or better. I'll meet all my friends, for I've come back to stay; there is one thing sure, it don't pay to rove always; we have to live and learn, and die and forget, but I'll never sheet another wagon to go to a swamp, and those who do are certain to get swamped."

"You haven't told us your boy's name yet," said Quita.

"I must not forget that; his name is True Tarver."

"Pretty name," said Faula.

"And a handsome boy that bears it," continued Mace; "I've had to do with a good many boys and men in my rounds, but for natural fitness, disposition, and integrity of life, my boy is hard to surpass. Poor boy, he's only lacking in one thing—money; but I'm going to help him some; had him with me yesterday to Howe's office, and the lawyer took a fancy to him—loaned him some good books, and said he wanted to see him often."

"Where did you find him?"

"Oh, yes; I was leaving that out. I found him away down in Dixie, about four years ago; he had come there with his parents some years before; while I lived there they both died and left him alone in the pinery, shelterless and penniless. Gray's mournful ballad expresses all their history in a few words: 'The short and simple annals of the poor.' They

were good people and not selfish, I know it, and in these greedy times that's saying something."

Mace was urged to remain and dine with them; he said he feared that fifteen years of camp life had disqualified him socially among folks used to house life.

"No, no," replied Mrs. Long; "never, never; a hundred years could not disqualify you or anyone whose standing you'd vouch for, at our home, and we want you to bring your boy and come and see us. You'll always be as welcome and as much appreciated as your advice was during our darkest days. Quita and I remember it; thanks to good fortune, the other girls don't recollect much and little Cub none of it."

Tears of gratefulness stole down the little woman's cheeks uninterruptedly, and in her loving voice articulation's tremor adorned every utterance, involuntarily indexing the pages of her gratitude.

As Mace walked to his tents that evening the serried forms of the past struggled and surged against the crowded beings of the future with such violence as to relegate to forgetfulness the things ready at hand. So deeply absorbed was he in this mighty contention for mastery that the present had lost all dominion over his meditation, its identity being covered up in the stormy desert of the long gone by or concealed by the dark veil on the face of the things to come.

"Exactly; now I have it plain and pretty as a rainbow." He stooped over and picked up a bright semicircular-formed piece of iron. "Now for the nails, if any." One was found, which being straightened with a stone, the footwear of some tired horse he nailed to a nearby sycamore.

'Tis said that eavesdroppers never hear any good about themselves. Admitted. But one acting in that mischievous capacity at Mace's camp that night would surely have been disappointed had he been listening for evil of anyone.

"True," said Mace, after he had scanned the last column of a metropolitan paper, "I've built an air-castle to-night in less time than Jack's bean-vine grew to the clouds."

"Did you build it as high?" inquired the boy, not dreaming what Mace meant.

"No, not so high," said Mace; "it's like the German's wife, it's 'vider, vider'—and I don't believe it's altogether a visionary project, either. I called on Mrs. Long and the children this afternoon and dined with them. She was one of the Chipmunk's owners you've heard me tell about. I hadn't seen her till to-day. Her oldest daughter, Quita, is grown, and she's lovely, graceful, neat, and possesses a degree of finish that it requires half a dozen generations of good breeding to produce.

"Boys frequently take the wrong road—in fact, oftener than that. True, I know I did, and you may do likewise, but I hope you won't. You see, Opportunity knocks once at every man's door; she doesn't always knock the door down, come in, and strike the inmate with a fence-rail, or make a malicious assault with an intent to commit a battery on him. No, sir; she doesn't maim anybody; it's a very easy, gentle, smooth, slight, little tap. If she is accorded the right kind of treatment, she'll come in and tarry yet a little; if not, time is the very essence of her mission, the chief and important point; she'll put by, in her search for the deserving, and to such things as 'Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,' she'll turn a deaf ear. Now you can see the foundation walls, roof, and gables of my castle in the air. I want you to love this girl, Quita; nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else. Not with a 'hip, hip, hurrah! this way, everybody' sort of love, but with an honest, earnest, and magnetic affection, so systematically planned and industriously executed that it will end in reciprocation."

"Well, Uncle Mel" (as True called Mace), replied the boy, "that is an impossibility. You've often told me there are no such things. I'd like to agree with you first rate, but I cannot and could not, for in my present condition, or in any condition I might attain to for years and years, I'd be asolutely barred away from a fair attempt at making love to one so much my superior."

"Don't think it, my boy; you have no superiors. Let me disillusionize you. I knew your father and mother well; one drop of their blood will grow a gentleman over whom none can exercise superiority."

"I do hope you are right, Uncle Mel; but you've often told me that those who shoot at the moon hit the earth."

"That holds good in gunnery, but not always in archery; when Cupid lets fly a dart lunaward, he hits the moon."

"And if he liked, he could fly to the moon also; but I'm wingless and without the sinews of war and love; as the two go together, why, she'd put me on a line of spring poetry as a counter-irritant for my ills; I wouldn't know what to do, say, or think."

"Hold on a minute; wait—wait—wait; I tell you, vacillation wins nothing; 'I can't' loses every skirmish; resolution is the parent of all verdicts and victories. 'I can't' is an old fly-blown lack-brain, without wisdom to contrive, beauty to deck, or strength to execute. You turn the stage management over to me, and I'll put up a play that will be worth the box receipts."

CHAPTER XIII.

“But for natural fitness, disposition, and integrity of life, my boy is hard to surpass.”

This smooth sentence lingered late in Quita's mind that night and combated Sleep's sweet odors with all the resourcefulness of a veteran. The outpost of wakefulness and subconsciousness strove laboriously for supremacy. Sleep's molifying narcotic had almost gained the contest, when Mace's other words came rushing upon the field as if to reinforce their well-nigh vanquished allies. “Died and left him alone in the pinery, shelterless and penniless.”

She wished she had not heard that. What had she to do with this young man? Why were these sentences so engraven in her soul? Why would they not be gone and leave her to her due repose? Why stand a barrier like a sore tooth (apparently taller than its neighbors) between her and “Nature's soft nurse”? Scores and scores of kindred questions called at her mind's mansion, paused for reply, and took their departure unanswered.

There could be but one solution, one explanation, one answer for all these inquiries—natural fitness, suitability, congeniality, tender adaptability.

“I pity him,” thought the restless girl, “or any child so bereft.” Her mind went back to the time when her own dear father was taken from them by the icy fingers of Death. She saw the flowerful mound above his sleeping-place in the near-by acre of the dead, and read again, as was her wont, the words on the granite pillar above his tomb. This meditation led her doubtless to the unmarked resting-place where the young man's parents lay among the pines and palmettos of the Southland. She drew the profile of a rural burying-ground far away

in some region where the bitter blasts of winter seldom visit, and where the odorous magnolia bloom gives out its sweetness to gratify the living, and the mocking-bird chants his daily requiem in veneration of the dead. Passing through the beautiful evergreen clusters that grew above the mouldering heaps of those who once tread the wine-press of this eventful span of grief, she came at length to two little sunken places.

“Ah!” sighed she, “perhaps in these neglected spots are laid——” Then the wakeful nerves relaxed their tensive hold, and she was wafted into the exhilarating dominions of soothing sleep. The all-captivating influences of dreamland being now in possession of her every faculty, all the vistas of memory were open wide, and the curtain of the future hoisted aloft; echoing voices of the dead past blended with future expressions, harmoniously as trained choristers. Retrospection and Second-sight sat chum-like in the same vine-clad bower. Groups of inconceivable absurdities and unlikelihoods paraded before her; she saw the disjointed and inarticulate skeletons of the ancient Aztecs plough, sow, and reap, and heard a venomous quintet of adders sing enchanting strains of melody; fish build their nests in lofty trees, whose leafless boughs conversed with flying vultures in plain English. The earth, no longer globular, remained, but, flattened out and separated into three decks, somewhat resembled the gallery, balcony, and first floor of an opera-house, and from the lowest deck were suspended myriads of little silken streamers, on one side of which was printed in Spanish, “Cui dado!” (meaning, “Look out!”), and on the other side of the flag-like banner were fastened with strands of red hair large apples, and out of their stems grew little wings. In the middle deck of this trisected earth she saw honey-bees as large as polar bears playing some games with aluminum globes by blowing them into the air with golden bellows; whenever a globe would fall, it broke open and would send out pieces of

green paper with the sentences pricked in them as with a pin, "Jot one, carry three; Fortune can't take away what she didn't give." The third floor was carpeted with rugs of Persian fineness; at intervals of about two minutes an illimitable balloon would sink slowly down on this deck and contract itself so rapidly before the next came down that it would be no larger than an orange; when thus reduced, it ran on the floor at her feet and cried in imitation of a baby.

The drowsy tide reversed its wonted course and carried the sleeper on its rocking waves back to the rude cot on the common before her father's death. She was in school again; it was Friday afternoon, nearing the weekly interval of relief for little ones. She saw the little room furnished with inexpensive seats and desks; it was recitation day, and they were all required to speak a piece or read an essay of their own composition. Many had "spoken" and "read"; it came her time. At this point she became two persons, the girl and the woman. She watched her little self bow to her infantile listeners with the dignity of a diplomat. In this double capacity, she observed minutely her every move, gesture, and facial expression; the large unfilmed brown eyes and long silken lashes, flawless pearly teeth, ruby lips, and chubby hands. With a superhuman effort worthy of a Webster or a Prentiss, she spoke the poetical jewel her mother had taught her:

"Two brown heads with tossing curls,
Red lips shutting over pearls,
Bare feet white and wet with dew,
Two eyes brown and two eyes blue.

* * * * *

They had cheeks like cherry red;
He was taller, 'most a head;
She, with arms like wreaths of snow,
Swung a basket to and fro.

* * * * *

Life is but a slippery steep,
Hung with shadows cold and deep."

* * * * *

She was now almost wholly lost in slumber; pleasurable scraps and detached pieces of thought passed through her mind and served as dessert for the happy dream-repast just partaken. The first scene in the tableau was rounding to its finish when Quita the woman concluded the little declamation:

"In a porch she sits, and lo!
Swings a basket to and fro.
Vastly different from the one
That she swung in years ago.
This is long, and deep, and wide,
And ——— has ———"

Rocking waves and gladsome zephyrs inspired a deeper sleep and swept the mimical actors from her thoughts.

Morn's first beams were throwing their invigoration with lavish hand through the lattice and pane when Quita woke. The whole forenoon of that day she thought the most melancholy period of her existence. She was morbid, unstrung, decentralized. Every whit of the past night's dream had been mislaid in her memory. In vain did she tax her recollective strength for the forgotten ecstasy. It was gone, irretrievably gone; not a letter or line could she exhume from the hazy caverns of memory.

The minutes came and went snail-like; the colorless and unromantic day seemed to drag its tiresome length a fortnight. The other children, beaming with cheerfulness, luckily failed to observe her depressed condition. Excessive dullness continued to monopolize every second of her time until in the late afternoon she resolved to shake off the drowsy spell that had so defied all resistance. She played and sang, painted some, did considerable fancy needlework, and, although she hadn't

an ache or pain, even took two doses of medicine, the helplessness of which is often a glaring blot on the art of healing.

Modern scientific research has shown how consumption can be cured, how malaria and fevers may be prevented, and how the most distressing symptoms of diphtheria may be alleviated and often lastingly cured. But no systematized investigation has ever thrown much light in the direction of a cure for the blues; no simple or compound known to the *Materia Medica* dare provoke combat with this formidable foe to humanity's quietude; it requires means and measures more powerful than tinctures. Disorders of the mind will yield to no treatment but something originating in contemplation, and in the garden of mentality there is an herb that will heal or stay the approach of any malady that disturbs the intellectual power of human kind.

As a last resort for the distressing train of thoughts that had so persistently harassed her, she went to the attic, resolved once more to examine the scanty store of effects which once constituted their belongings before the Chipmunk's bounteousness had transferred them from the ranks of want to wealth. Every piece of the furniture had been stored all these years. She regarded these chattels with a devotion approaching sacredness.

After every article had been examined closely, her glance fell upon Cub's little cradle. Both hands flew up. Riveting her eyes on the rockers, she exclaimed: " 'And has rockers on each side.' I've found it—the key that unlocks the steel-clad receptacle of my queer dream! Oh, you precious little heirloom! without you my sleep-thoughts would never have crossed the boundary line of oblivion."

She felt relieved immeasurably. Care, burden, anxiety, and uneasiness, all of which had flaunted their black flags of distress in her presence the whole day, had now fled to unknown quarters and left her felicitating the advent of her re-

lease from them. She spent the remainder of her time in the garret fitting and dovetailing together the cardinal features of her dream. The undertaking seemed easy until she began to more fully understand all the details; then entanglement and perplexity again swaggered to the front to reassert their supremacy.

"Aye, aye, even so," said Quita; "I can truly say with Byron, 'I had a dream, which was not all a dream.' Oh for some Joseph to unfold the meaning of my sleep visions; to lay open the things concealed and explain them! But such cannot be; soothsayers, familiar spirits, and foreknowers belong not to this age. I'm persuaded to venture a long-range forecast on the meaning of this phantom myself.

"Skeletons, sowing, reaping; do they allude to my father's interest in the Chipmunk, which never developed until his death? Trees talking with vultures; that must be our family, for the worst professional tramp on the round earth can get food and plenty of kind words. And the growing wishbones and little cradle bed, what do they both predict? Well, well; I'm not a prophetess. If they allude to a future fact or act, I'll let them stand or fall when testing-time comes."

CHAPTER XIV.

Many phases of successful management must of necessity go through experimental stages, and none are more familiar with this truism than a practical miner. It is not expedient to experiment very much in surgery or in legislation and many other things, but in mining the more the better, and it is only by a series of experiments that any uniform laws of mining are ever ascertained. In this old time-honored experimental school Mace had acquired his "try again" habit to a nicety; retreating from the field often in good order, but never considering for a moment any proposition for a surrender. So when, after True and Quita had become acquainted, he had confided to Mace his candid opinion that any trial he might make in a love-affair would prove fruitless, or worse, Mace took a large chew of tobacco, or recruited a half-wasted one, and said:

"Now, now, be easy; you've got another throw; the spots are not worn off the dice yet. Charley Goodyear didn't vulcanize rubber the first dash out of the box, and Elias Howe's lockstitch needle wasn't at its best the first jump either. You fall before you're fired on; stay and take the count. You may scramble up when the referee gets in the vicinity of eight or nine, and ultimately win the belt. You can't weigh, measure, or estimate what can be done by trying. A battle is never lost until it is fought. In that old Fourth Reader race, we'd all have bet on the rabbit; tortoise money, one to a hundred, wouldn't have lasted till it was all gone; and yet Judge Fox was compelled to decide that Mr. Tortoise had won the race hands down, leaf, stem, and stump. No, sir-ee; don't tell me that any well-directed effort is ever fruitless; you see, I'm one of the unterrified who knows different. And now, my boy," Mace continued, with an air and attitude indicative of observa-

tion, "there is to be a swell affair at Mrs. Long's next Tuesday night; she's going to have all the old Chipmunk people, owners and employees, all that can possibly come, from A to &. You and I are urgently requested to be on hand. There will be music, speech-making, and refreshments, light, medium, and heavy. I want you to make a talk. Of course you know nothing of the Chipmunk's history, but any subject well handled will be appropriate."

"Suppose, Uncle Mel, I can't handle any subject well."

"Then do the next best thing," said Mace; "handle it the best you can. You can't expect to develop into a Vorhees or a Vest at your age, and if you should, you'd have to die before the bulk of the people would set much to your credit."

"Very likely you're right," replied True, "but I mustn't try to make a speech; these Northern people say I don't talk properly."

"There you go again! Haven't I told you often, anything is proper that can be understood? Don't you know that General Washington said 'hoss,' 'dollah,' 'brothah,' 'sistah,' 'barr-footed,' and 'up-stahs'? and so did his mother and Lincoln's too, and thousands of others—good'ns—drop out their *rs* so hard that they broke all to pieces. Let them say you talk like a 'niggah' if they want to say it; it isn't true by any means; the fact is, the colored man talks like you. He learned to talk from your people, and they all—you with them—learned it from their dear old mothers. No, sir-ee; stick to your dialect; don't resurrect the *r*; you don't need it; your mother didn't, and didn't use it, and a man isn't worth a damn a dozen that doesn't talk like his mother."

It was going on the third month since True began studying law with Howe. It was plain he was more than an ordinary poor boy, such as is met every day trying to climb the "greased pole" from the school-room to a good annual income. He was

diligently devoted to the acquisition of knowledge from books, as well as attentive and careful, and was an expert questioner; once was often enough to tell him anything, for, like Mace, his foster-father and friend, little that was useful escaped his memory.

Besides poring over Blackstone, Kent, and Bouvier nine or ten hours every day, he devoted about four hours at night to Shakespeare, Æsop, Swift, and such other standard works as he could get, as well as the newspapers.

Howe came to see them almost every Sunday afternoon and took Mace for a long ride through the ledge-built Shoal Creek hills. On these invigorating airings they discussed with absolute freedom their circumstances, surroundings, conditions, desires, and past histories; perhaps never before was Mace so open and unrestrained on all subjects.

On one of these trips Howe sought to persuade Mace to give up his secluded life, move to the zinc metropolis, mix and mingle with men of affairs, and, as he expressed it, really be somebody sure enough.

"No; I prefer to remain just where I am, so far as domicile is concerned; not that I am mad at the world or opposed to its laws and rules of domesticity; I do believe, however, in keeping a close watch on the human animal. Old Bill Burton used to say he wasn't afraid the world was getting any worse; it was like the Irish woman's son; she said she had no fears that Jimmie would ever be any worse, for he was as bad right then as he could get.

"Yes, sir," Mace continued, "I had become inured to solitude before I picked up your student; so much so that often the human voice was a grating discord to my ears, man's nature a black-hearted and evil-tainted lie, and his shape almost an inconceivable monstrosity, but I seldom tell my thoughts along these lines, and keep such impressions mostly to myself.

There is no profit in loading your estimate of men on their own scales, especially if they do the weighing. But I'm not answering your question; I always answer one query by propounding two more and then answering my own. In the first place, I am constantly on good terms with myself; I have never violated one treaty made with Melvin Mace, Esq., and I don't think he has.

"Now, if you'll study hard on that a long time, then probe it and let the sun shine through it good, you'll see its too valuable a package for an 'old horse sale.' I think it a good doctrine to let run at large. Faults I have many, and mistakes I've made by the score (as the funeral orator says)—who of us have not?—but I've always bored a straight hole with myself. And secondly, I'm not very gregarious; I never was overstocked with a desire to herd up much; this may be due to rapacity on my part. Zoölogists say that rapacious animals are not generally gregarious. And third, and lastly, I tried your plan once upon an untimely time, and failed egregiously; that issue is fought and finished in my mind as definitely as the battle of Yorktown."

"Your answers, Mace," replied Howe, "are doubtless satisfactory to yourself, but do they yield content to all persons interested in your existence? Natural law demands of us a contribution to society commensurate with our abilities. One with a force of understanding larger than the common herd should make partition with them, and while legislative arms are too weak to write it in the statute-books, and our executives perhaps powerless to enforce it if enacted, nevertheless it is an authority that has received the sanction of conscience ever since the human family began trying to do the right thing."

"I don't contradict that," said Mace. "The only difference between us, if any, would be the manner of the partition and who would constitute the arbitrators to measure and pass

on the understanding. If left to you and those who hold your views, you would say that what intellectual candle-power I have is under a bushel. I and my kind would assert that my method of living—hedged with a disposition forced upon me by heredity, pride, bravery, or disease—is more productive of good than if I were an all-around mixer. The recluse lives of David Crockett, Daniel Boone, James Bridger, Kit Carson, and others of their cast and kind, stand among the greatest lights in American history. These fellows were willing to do things. I like to follow their examples. Somebody had to kill the rattlesnakes, discover the mountain passes, and locate the valuable minerals. It requires very little courage to sit down and eat a great big meal that some poor back-aching woman has spent half a day in preparing (peeling, parboiling, and the like) one thousand and ninety-five times per annum, and very little more boldness does it take to don a shirt washed and ironed by her whose feet are swollen at nightfall because the valvular action of her heart is too weak to pump the sluggish blood up from them. No, sir-ee; bedad! I've too much grit in my crop to stand for the like of that; there is nothing that tires me so much and so acutely as to see and hear an old 'iron gray' take the easy chair at the head of the Sunday dinner-table and begin, 'We want to thank Thee for thus bestowing upon us from Thy bounteous storehouse these articles for our daily sustenance,' and so on, after his poor walking clothes-frame wife has drudged the whole forenoon cooking the repast on an old crematorium-like stove with a soggy pine box and a rotten fence-post for fuel; and then maybe he gets up singing:

'Oh! we love to come to our Sabbath home

When the six days' toil are o'er,'

when every soul in the county knows that he hasn't done a day's work in twenty years;

'And read and sing of our Heavenly King,

And learn to love Him more,'

when the gluttonous old hypocrite loves to stuff his maw with the good things prepared by the bird-claw hands of his slave-wife eight million times more than he does to read or sing of any thing, person, or place here, hereabouts, or hereafter. Far more appropriate would be that other old melodized triumphal, 'My Gospel Ship Is Overloaded.' "

"I have an unbidden sense of fear, mixed with a crude theory of my own," replied Howe apologetically, "that one of your chief misfortunes has been a very close observation of the bad; and while I would be the last person to charge you by indirection or otherwise with willfully or inadvertently seeking out isolated examples of villainy, yet it is not improbable, Mace, that some, maybe many, individual occurrences of merit have escaped through the meshes of your closely drawn net."

"Nor will I gainsay that proposition; your theory may be rigidly correct, but you know what a theory is; it's like a mule we had at the coal-mines in Illinois; the pit boss said he had three gaits—start, stumble, and fall. When you want to make a forced march with a theory, you get laid down on. You remember what the 'rithmetic said: 'Theorem (from *theory*), something to be proved; problem, something to be done.' We might say: Problem—the tree; theorem—the shadow of the tree. Shadow—nothing; the larger the tree the bigger the nothing; the more long-drawn and elaborate the theory the larger the diameter of the bung-hole without the barrel. My isolated examples of villainy you speak of have never been fanciful, or the products of a dreamy shuttle woven in the loom of disjointed thoughts; to say the very least, they have been the real things. Many good deeds may have eluded my observation, and for squareness I'll admit it; if so, it signifies no degree of criminal negligence on my part; and many good-intentioned people may have done badly in my presence and hearing just for curiosity. I don't say they did; I am not

scenting backward, lost-hound-like, for a cause; I'm only dissecting discovered effects. 'There's no good in counter-hunting on the trail of a furious beast after you are bitten, or tracking the poisoned arrow back to the tight string that sent it. In such cases the wound is the all-absorbing feature of attention. Hours and days, Howe, are too limited to burn in theorizing, especially to one who has had fifty birthdays. But the most lamentable part in the whole make-up of nearly all theories is their falsity; nine-tenths of them are untrue, in fact. Why, bless my time! Howe, since I've been a man fully grown, of lawful age, I've heard some of the noted divines in America preach that 'most all the nooks, corners, and out-of-the-way places in hell were filled with infants a span long—think of that! Eight little fat-breeched cherubs to the fathom—unless the metric system has been adopted as the standard of measure for the smoky lake; if so, then it's eight to the something else; at any rate, just think (one-twelfth of a moment) of their little chubby palms outstretched from the twentieth-story windows of the bottomless pit, pleading like Dives to their mothers, who are striking glad hands on the sunny slopes of sweet deliverance; then you are face to face with a theory in all its beauty. That was one of the most pronounced theories that was *sought, bought, and taught* in this big country much less than fifty years ago. Howe, I will bet," continued Mace, as if inviting another interrogatory, "that some, if not all, of these statements grate on your orthodox ears; but if they do, you have then got me stood off, for they coat my agnostic tongue to tell them. You remember I used to have a rule that I was engaged to by holy vows, and I practice it yet as religiously as ever; but I've added another one. To my code of conduct in late years, my old rule, 'Look everyone square in the face,' I've subjoined this one: 'Job error.' It's short and easy to recollect. While the twain are

as dissimilar as the features of the human family, yet there is a co-efficacy arising from their union that is good law; not good theory, but good practice—wholesome, salutary, sound. So I have affirmed and declared that whenever and wherever I see clearly and feel keenly error, either voluntary or involuntary, I'm going to combat it with all honorable means. I may not overthrow, conquer, or defeat it, but there is one thing certain besides death and taxes, and that is, I will not let it gain sovereignty over me if I know it; and should I succeed with all my might in subduing one deep-seated error, I'll be entitled to endless honors. I said I had tried your plan and failed; now I'll explain by telling you something that few people know. I've told no one in these parts—not that it's a secret, but simply because the public has not been concerned. There is a woman somewhere who was once my lawful wife and the mother of as sweet a baby girl as ever gladdened a parental heart: thanks to a tender Providence, she died, and our family plant lost its only tendril before the placid stream of connubial love sank into the burning sands of unendurable discontent. Howe, I don't know," Mace continued reflectively, "but the sweetest words are often the unuttered, and the ablest defense silence. 'Tisn't the elicitation of sympathy or anything of that sort that moves me to tell you my domestic distress; that has little, if anything, to do with our subject; every man's load of grief becomes a staggering burden at times, and it relieves the heart to disclose what lies heaviest on it. I don't do so in the hope that my load will ever be borne by other shoulders than mine. The tormenting daggers of the dark past have done their worst; the ugly and lasting scars they've cut and seared in the folios of my brain I'm willing to carry and coceal, happily knowing that they end with my last pulsation.

"Yes, sir, I married nearly twenty years ago, and long after old Ben Burton, my inimitable friend, told me that it was

almost a certainty, if I ever embarked on a matrimonial voyage, that it would require superior skill, strengthened with an abundance of good luck, to make the venture pan out.

“Man is the only creature that will not profit by the experience of his fellows. The blind ant will touch and turn back a thousand of his co-workers from a dangerous mire in a ten-yard trip; the wise wild gander’s cautious honk is submissively obeyed by the whole V-shaped flock; but lurking somewhere in the human fibrous structure is a mutinous tissue that spews up sweet consultation as a dog does green grass. This unjustifiable and unaccountable obstinacy has caused the major part of man’s woe-laden condition, and will continue to be the sorrow-burdened millstone about his neck until the birth-bells of some age of ripeness when the children of men shall read and heed the danger-signals erected by older heads along life’s perilous avenues.

“‘One with a force of understanding larger than the common herd should make partition with them.’ Howe, you said something your own self,” continued Mace, as if wanting to go back and take up an overlooked thread in the first skein of their conversation. “Let’s soak that in salt water awhile, and see if we can get a fish taste out of it. To begin, who is the common herd, or, more gramatically, who *are* they? They are the Smiths, Browns, Joneses, Tom, Dick, and Harry, ‘Faro Dan,’ ‘Alkali Ike,’ ‘Iron-jawed Nell,’ ‘Frog-mouthed Annie,’ and many, many more—in fact, very nearly everybody, all well stirred up and shook down into one conglomerated human hodgepodge. It is a big box of foxes; the sight and scent of some of them would jar the cherries off a summer hat. Howe, you’re right, more than right; understanding should be parceled out. It earns no interest while hoarded, but oh, my! what an undertaking to force reason into an ungifted and densely prejudiced mind! and how often the attempt remains

only an attempt! Yesterday I talked with an intelligent-looking woman who believes in ghosts. I reasoned with her the best I could and said:

“ ‘Lady, you’re honestly mistaken about your own belief. You can’t believe such things.’

“ ‘Can’t I?’ came her quick retort. ‘Do you believe in the city of Denver?’

“ ‘Yes; I know there is such a place,’ said I, ‘for I’ve seen it.’

“ ‘Just so,’ said she, ‘is my belief in ghosts rooted, for I have seen them—not one or twelve, or ten score, but thousands upon thousands, over and often.’

“Now, what more could I do or say along the line of making partition with her? Not one little thing—no part, portion, quantity, or degree. I just thought and thought.”

“That’s a matter of her own veracity, Mace,” said Howe, “or, rather, a want of veracity; she ought to be impeached; I’ll venture her neighbors wouldn’t believe her on oath, not one of them.”

“Now don’t venture too much on that; you might lose. It’s a crime to bet if you lose, and you’re too close to the State line to wager much against crankism,” said Mace, giving Howe a look that was a combination of a good-natured smile and a mild contempt.

“Crankism has got a hold on the earth that is hard to unloose; mankind always disagreed, quarreled, fought, and murdered about the unascertainable. Now, will it pay, or is it always right, to tell folks the way of learnedness in the face of an opposition amounting to open war? Dr. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, and they did a plenty for him, didn’t they? Only killed him—why, they declared by public manifestoes that his works and words were insurrectionary, and that he merited death—and why? That’s easy: he was

teaching something new; so was Saul of Tarsus, Joseph Smith, and Mary Eddy."

"I know that, Mace; but, you see, that was upwards of three hundred years ago; people were ignorant then, and contented with it."

"True enough, Howe; but it makes no difference as to time. Time, that spells nothing; you can justify anything or anybody by the record, and dig up any proofs you want out of history. They also had fried witches for breakfast about those times, and for a change of menu had them smothered with onions *à la* Salem, Massachusetts. The common people then had no time to think; it took all their time to plow, plant, reap, flail, toil, and labor day in and day out and day in again; to stay hunger and hide nakedness. The nobleman spent his valuable time in the corner drunkery, or planning fresh adventures among the easy amorettes, unless the bishop happened to need his help to iron out some church difficulty or formulate a new article of faith. He could sober up long enough for that."

"Howe, I often think there should be a law passed against quoting anything as authentic that occurred, or is reported to have occurred, before the discovery of America; every mother's son of them, except Columbus, thought the earth was flat, when they had evidence sky-high of its roundness; and, as conclusive and absolute proof of their infinitesimal littleness, they cast him into prison for publishing an account of things that had always existed. Whoop! big Indians them! And after the poor old navigator died of want, starvation, and ill treatment, they did as we do now—no, not we, for I'm not of the penitent portion of mankind who worship backwards; but they did as a vast majority do these days, cried themselves into sore eyes, and moved him so often from place to place, as though his skeleton had something to do with his thinking. Oh, how sorry they

were after his death! Looks like one good strong repentance would be enough, but no; the Dr. Harvey tragedy, the Salem conflagration, the Nauvoo, Illinois, murder, and a million more examples of such unauthorized human violences, have been enacted since. You can't teach grown persons much; their heads are not the right shape, and their skulls are too thick—they've glanced more bullets than the craniums of all other animals; the only way to 'make up' a really sensible man (after giving him a good rational father and mother) is to begin when he's about seven or eight years of age and give him (in equal parts) large doses of truth and good treatment. The world has tried everything else like the old doctors tried bleeding and blistering. When I was a boy, if one got sick, a surgeon was sent for post-haste, who bled him instanter; if the patient recovered, of course the blood-letting did it; if he died, it was because the surgeon did not get there in time with his lancet.

"Pages, chapters and whole volumes were written and printed and, I'm sorry to say, read on the subject of venesection or blood-letting. Just take a look at a surgeon's library a few years back, first volume on the top shelf: '*Phlebotomy, or the Science and Practice of Opening Veins for the Cure of Diseases and Preserving Health. By Elijah Theophilus Cutum Down, A.B., LL.D., and M.D.*' W-h-e-w! Wouldn't that look in these days like a little Negro baby in a big silver bathtub? I'm truly glad I've added the new '*Job error*' rule to my other guide precepts. I was always willing and anxious to be doing something, and this rule in force keeps one well employed; there are many errors and combinations of deceit that need knocking out. They are on the go day and night, pell-mell, helter-skelter. The public will give me no kind thoughts or thanks; I'm not working for that sort of pay anyhow, but chiefly to get a good doctrine out of a bad rut, and

fix the road for better travelling in the future. If an expensive and villainous belief is completely unhorsed, the generations coming on will never know the mischief it wrought while in operation; and they are the little tots I'm going to try to assist; I want them to have a better stage than I've played on—they'll need it."

Howe seemed bewildered at Mace's dissertation, and the Yankee way he had of putting his thoughts into sentences; the more he gazed at the distant illusions the closer they appeared to him, and many of Mace's hints and intimations became on minute examination truths uncontradictable. After he had apparently digested the last bit of nourishing mental sustenance possible for him to draw through the medium of his earnest meditation from Mace's erudite though somewhat zig-zagging remarks, he clamped Mace by the hand, and said:

"My friend, you've handed down a decision reversing all precedents; 'almost thou persuadest me to be a'——"

"Free man," interjected Mace.

"Precisely so, precisely so, and you're a mind-reader."

"No, not a mind-reader; just a lucky guesser."

Their chatty tendencies gradually drifted on to the robust hope each cherished for the some time to be; and the good things that the upgoing curtain of the future might reveal to the impatient multitudes who'd be in waiting for the little three-act tragedy—birth, marriage, and death.

Oh, wee-faced, tender, swaddling-clothed buds of conubial bliss, oases on the desert of existence, the only bubbling, rippling, satisfying fountains along the stony thoroughfare of life! Wedlock (second act on the uncharted program), thou pernicious and unreliable lottery ticket, unblemished fruit, whose succulency may be the fountain of youth, or whose poisonous secretions, upas-like, contaminate even the zephyrs that blow near it. Granite or swansdown; fairest, foulest; dark-

est, lightest; longest, shortest; perpetually blest or irrevocably cursed; medium of joy, sorrow, love, hate, incontinency, and a thousand other contemptible traits and noble features, beyond the dream of dictionaries. Life's greatest medley, whose mixed and mingled ingredients run along and into the third and last act in the performance, in which the lowering cords of the undertaker let the abandoned tenement of clay down and back to its elemental kindred—helpless decrepitude, comfortless dotage, wrinkles and rags; the favored and the unfavored; the faithful and the treacherous; the well-to-do and the needy; the skillful and the unlearned; all, all, victims and victorious, must finally unite in one long and lasting "Good-bye all, good-bye!"

CHAPTER XV.

The following Wednesday morning's issue of *The Miners' Messmate* gave a several-column write-up regarding the Chipmunk's banquet at Mrs. Long's; the paper's reportorial staff was on hand in full force; not only did it give a detailed account of the affair, but also contained a lavish editorial, rich with complimentary praises for all the attendants. The gathering, which at first was intended to be very informal, developed into an assemblage possessing a fair share of elevated deportment as well as intellectuality. The subjects, which had been prearranged by the toastmaster, were handled in a way that few present expected to hear. After the tasteful things had been managed according to the latest dignified standards, the speakers, in the order of their own arranging, were given the best attention.

Heck Bruce, responding to the subject "The World We Heard About," said in part:

"*My dear old Chipmunkers:* I want to tell you that it affords me great pleasure to once more meet and be with you. I have lived in many neighborhoods; in fact, was a rambler for more than one-half of my life, and would be to-day had not the Chipmunk's dividends provided me a competence sufficient for the 'rainy days' of my approaching age. I like this vicinity in every respect far better than any other place I've ever lived; if I didn't, I wouldn't stay here.

"Beginning, I'll ask you to blot from memory, if possible, my many mistakes in language, as most words are only sounds anyway, and if we had a perfect language, which is an impossibility, some new-hatched grammarian would rush upon the scene and prove beyond the minutest doubt that it was improper, inelegant, and offensive.

"The world we heard about and the one we know about are two separate, different, and distinct globes, governed, ruled, controlled, and influenced by two separate, different, and distinct codes of laws. Let me illustrate by instancing a few examples: That all men are created free and equal; that every man is the architect of his own misfortune; that you should love your neighbor as yourself; and that little Bopeep lost her sheep. These things, and thousands more smooth-flowing sentiments like unto them, constitute a large part of the world we heard about.

"Let's look at the other sphere a moment, whirling about in its orbit. There never were two individuals created, born, or evolved on absolute equality, and few, if any, free; that the man who is the architect of his own misfortune is he, and he only, who has no wife, child, father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, friend, or foe, nor ever had, to superintend the construction of the human edifice; that to love your neighbor as yourself in every respect, at all times, and under all circumstances is a doctrinal proposition that was not, can not, has not, and will not ever be obeyed by any man, set of men, firm, corporation, or co-partnership; that Bopeep will be compelled to search hills and hollows in order to find her bell-wether and the rest of the flock (not killed by dogs and wolves) is absolutely certain.

"These are a little, wee, tiny less than any assignable small quantity of the world's characteristics we know about, and, my friends, when I say I *know* about, I don't mean in all probability, or it is quite likely, or that good, truthful, and reliable folks say so, or that is the common understanding among the well-informed and practical business men; but I mean KNOW, in all its fullest, broadest, and most comprehensive signification.

"After you grow up, Santa Claus quits coming; his dappled and well-matched span of elks are unyoked and turned

out on the common for all time to come—so far as you, my adult friends, are concerned. There is no pot of gold at the rainbow's base for grown people. Saffron butterflies passing you on Tuesday are no evidence that you will get a yellow silk dress soon, and all the salt of commerce thrown on the bird's tail won't catch it, except in the mind of infancy, and only there for a little while.

“My hearers, these childhood hallucinations are certain to come to a sudden or a gradual termination; delusions must cease, and rigid realities take their places along the firing-line. I want to ask you, one and all, to never miss an opportunity to tell your children: ‘Look out, take care, watch him.’ ‘Don't believe what you hear, and only a little of what you see.’ ‘Don't lend him those few dollars; if you do, you're putting money down, down, down that you'll never pick up.’ I believe the world we hear about and the world we know about ought to be bottled up and well shaken before taking, so that all cuts would contain both streaks of fat and lean. Grown people hold too many *séances* with childhood; in fact, they hold too many with themselves; were it not for the fact that, like an over-dose of poison, they cure themselves.

“The easiest thing in life is to overdo a thing, and the most difficult is to know when you are overdoing it. We pile and load the stage full of myths, fictions, images, idols, and other forms of false representations, and, on the pretext of future applause, we invite the gaze of youth, while we ourselves chatter like monkeys between acts, thinking of the good things our share of the box-money will buy. Shame on us! shame on us! Let's tell the truth, and tell it now, to-morrow, next week, and all the time, and live it, *and live it*, AND LIVE IT. It's worse to live a lie than tell it. One is just a simple lie; the other is a compound of deception and falsehood—powder and ball—that does the assassin's work. I, for one, firmly believe

that the time has fully arrived when we should tell what we know about this world and its people (if we know anything), and not what someone told us the world would be when we got our little frail barks launched into and onto it.

“We’re only in the world’s inventive dawn. Little has been discovered—scarcely enough to invoice; and yet we are spending our precious time and hard-earned dollars trying to convince ourselves and others that this is the same world we heard about. We give men hundreds of dollars per annum, current money with the merchants, to dig from the undiscoverable secrets of the past our high-priced ideas of an unneeded future punishment.

“I long for an age of common sense; a day of wisdom when good wagon-horse sense will be the rock of appeal for all that live.

* * * * *

“Almost all of our speakers and writers are constantly harping about marvelous achievements, wonderful discoveries, extraordinary advancement, rapid progressional strides along inventive lines. Now, what have we invented? what have we discovered? and, for truth’s sake, how much have we achieved? Only such things as the stern and unrelenting mandate of grim-faced Necessity has compelled us to do. Necessity is an unmotherly mother. She has remorselessly abandoned many a helpless offspring by the wayside, when the sharp-toothed cause that compelled its existence had temporarily set his fangs on other’s flesh. The hypocritical devotees at her shrine and in her name have committed every offense in the criminal code times innumerable.

“Our most laboriously produced inventions have always been the instruments of warfare. We learned to tan leather away back yonder. Why don’t we learn to make it, and be as wise as the ox? I’ll answer: We’ve never tried. We send

electric messages in iron wire. Why not in the ocean or the air? We've never tried. Why don't we gather solar heat in summer and store it up the same as we gather ice in winter? Same answer: We've never tried. Think of the prodigious electric energy in the ebb and flow of the tide—all lost; and the 'wind bloweth where it listeth.' The little ill-humored bee takes the honey out of the blossom, it doesn't put it in. The sluggish silk-worm manufactures his fine fabrics from the mulberry-leaf; he doesn't create the leaf. Are the bees and the worms superior artisans to the kings of creation? All who believe they are will please say 'Aye'; contrary, 'No.' The 'Nos' have it.

"I tell you, boys, we've only cat-scratched the high places of Nature's virgin-dimpled resources. The common privilege of humanity is to make, have, use, and enjoy anything that adds to the stock of our agreeable sensations or subtracts from the sum total of all pains. The word *impossible* only applies to the non-essentials, the unimportant, and to nothing else. No essentiality can long remain an impossibility. Earth's physical and mental bombardiers will batter down its seemingly impregnable walls like our friend Mace did the big zinc spider which his efforts turned into gold. I earnestly believe the only key that will ever unlock these essentials and all of them is couched and wadded in the one little word *try*; and I further honestly believe the only way to induce all and everybody to try, and try their dead level best, is to tell the young folks in time what the game is they are about to sit in. Don't tell them that there will be ten months of the calendar winter and the other two months way late in the fall—that's above the limit; but do all to early fix in the mind of childhood the fact that they'll be on 'Jordan's stormy banks' about as often as on 'flowery beds of ease.'"

"Squire" McGuire, who was not set down for a speech, said in part:

"I certainly favor anniversaries and holidays; the more holidays the better with me, for I am trying hard eight hours a day and some overtime to wean myself of the work habit," he began. "They furnish an opportunity for us old wheel-horses to catch a good breath, look about, and take stock. It occurs to me in late years that 'most every man I meet is running with all his physical power to catch some dollar-a-mile hearse, for fear he'll not get a front seat in eternity, and especially is this true since high speed is the only way to get money. However, I don't want to be understood as being opposed to money or its influence honestly and fairly exercised; money is corn to me, meat and bread both. I've heard often that corn would not fatten a horse, and that money doesn't bring happiness. Now, I never could fatten a horse without corn, and never have a good time without money; some people may, but not I. It took cash to procure the good things that have disappeared from this board to-night, and it takes cash or its equivalent to get all other good things. I have a respect bordering on veneration for any enterprise that is a decided honest money-maker; and that is the greatest reason I can offer for being here with you and celebrating the old Chipmunk. It was a winner, a bread - and - butter winner, a mortgage - lifter, a hungry-wolf-chaser; it clothed and fed more people, bought more books and papers, and built more homes than any other mine ever did in this district, or ever will until some future 'good boy' evolves a method of getting the zinc ores from the way-down-deep region that we now dream of, but as yet cannot reach, and that old hammer-headed, distorted-featured lad, ugly enough to freeze his own sweat, will be here in time and he'll deliver the goods; with his process, future prospectors will go down hereabouts a thousand feet below the Chipmunk's lowest stope, and they'll

hoist zinc enough to galvanize everything in sight. (Applause.)

"And I hope to see many recurrences of this night. Let's meet once a year as long as there are two of us left. And when indigestion, booze, and Providence have planted us for keeps, I trust this community will long remember that we were Chipmunkers and looked every man square in the face."

The orchestra then played "Down Went McGinty," "Sweet Violets," and "Dem Golden Slippers." A little bit old, but very suggestive and in keeping with McGuire's remarks.

Mace declined to respond, but, after repeated calls from the banqueters, said that his public speeches had always been delivered by proxy; that young Tarver would represent both of them on that occasion. Howe said that, as the hour was late, he would also draft Mr. Tarver to fill his place, so he could speak for the three of them.

Mr. Tarver said in part:

"*Ladies, Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen:* It delights me to raise my voice in praise of that portion of our people whose efforts add continuously to the world's supply of metals and mineral fuels. The farmer has representatives in the legislatures of every State and Territory in this Union and in both houses of our national Congress, and even in the presidential chair. The transportation corporations have their large-minded men on hand at all times and in all places to see that their interests are safeguarded to the uttermost. The manufacturer, the banker, the bond-holder, and the merchant are active and alert to see that they and each of them get what is coming, and more if possible. But nowhere in society, in legislation, in litigation, or in high walks of life was the miner ever fully and fairly treated or divided with. A common soldier—yes, sometimes a very common one, is lauded to the high plane of an 'Abou Ben Adhem' because perchance he has helped massacre a lot of unfortunate poor whom we are pleased to call

for the time being 'the enemy.' So I say the world's greatest benefactors have ever been neglected, not only in poetry and in song, but in the priceless jewel they and every one of them have so abundantly deserved—our sublimest thankfulness. The men who go down into the layers of this earth and find the minerals and valuable fossils therein imprisoned, bringing them out in one hand and their lives as it were in the other, with greater danger and more risk to health and happiness than any other vocation among all the gainful occupations—that class of citizens deserve at our hands the greatest degree of gratitude.

"The world has lavishly showered its many gifts and much good will on almost every class except the miner; he who has added most to our enduring wealth is least thought of, less remembered, and still less paid. This manner of affairs should be reversed, a popular repentance brought about, and all go in an opposite direction.

* * * * *

"To me the Chipmunk Mine is a fiction, a hearsay; to you, the owners and employees, it is a fadeless memory, a flowering garden to enduring prosperity, 'as rivers of water in a dry place, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'

* * * * *

"The legislative department of our Government should be besieged so persistently and continuously by an all-together effort of miners and their friends that it would create at Washington a Department of Mines and Mining, the head of which should be a member of the President's cabinet."

The secretary was instructed to make a roster of the Chipmunkers, their places of abode, and all necessary facts in and about the perpetuity of the organization.



HECK BRUCE

CHAPTER XVI.

In their early native simplicity, the sons of men quarreled, fought, and killed; History whispers in our ears their annals in chapters short and bloody; but modern competitive ingenuity has brought forth another and more prolix mode of human contestation—the lawsuit. The quarrel, the dispute, the brawl, and the battle, in the by-gone days of our ancestors, must of necessity have had their beginnings, prolongations, and endings; but latter-day strife between man and man, and sometimes between man and woman, resembles somewhat the hope of immortal glory mentioned in one of the Pauline Letters: “The house not made with hands”; yet, not being “in the heavens,” it certainly has the other qualification, absolutely “eternal.”

In the turmoil of earthly controversies, the lawsuit, in some form, confronts nearly all of us, and the folks formerly connected with the Chipmunk Mine were not immune from its virus. Bruce (who, the writer has neglected to say heretofore, was unmarried) was the first one whose monetary belongings attracted the hope of one of those who strive to persuade the courts of our country to apply a poultice of crisp currency to their outraged feelings.

The plaintiff, a buxom widow with rosy lips, sparkling complexion, apparently honest and complete in every way but one; that defect was her two little beady-black shoe-button eyes. It might be well to observe that there are more in some women’s eyes than retinas or vision-sense. One poet says:

“There are whole veins of diamonds in women’s eyes,
Might furnish crowns for all the queens of earth.”

But, to face the fact, I must say that if there were or ever had been any diamond “diggings” in the azure optics of the plaintiff,

iff, like the south paw of the big Chipmunk Mine, they had "pinched out," and for at least three years next before the commencement of this suit they were diamondless. One of her eyes was not what might be called crossed exactly—it was just sprung, bent, cocked up a little, as if surveying everything contained in the obtuse angle between the horizon and its own elevated view-plane; the other possessed that pliable attitude we denominate adaptability; it was thoroughly adjustable, and had focused its glittering pupil on many a fat purse prior to its sighting the defendant. She, with an able array of attorneys, jumped neck-deep into the court and also the local press with a twenty-five-thousand-dollar breach-of-promise case, that gave promise of racy developments.

The papers even printed her petition in full. It showed beyond doubt or any kind of guesswork that Bruce had promised over and over to take the little patient sufferer to someone having the lawful authority and there say and have said the gluing sentences that would unite the twain in the bonds of bliss, from which modern society is not extracting the degree of felicity that is indicated by the labels and bottles. Ten thousand tongues wagged freely; *pros* and *cons* were in the air, on every corner and at every crossing. Women's clubs discussed it; the Sunday morning sermons alluded to it; real-estate agents eagerly sought the acquaintance of the widow, with an eye to business, and her credit at the stores was at once established, for a big compromise was looked for, with a "dignified sum" for a consideration.

"Of course he won't let it go to trial—never, never! Why, hasn't he taken her out to the theaters and meetin'-houses, and hasn't he been a 'star boarder' at her house for months and months?"

"Good enough for him," continued another.

"That is just what law and courts are for—to make people

do what they agree to or pay the damages, and she'll get a chunk of Heck Bruce's coin that will make it easy for him to count and carry the rest."

"That's exactly where I've always stood," said another old wiseacre, as he hobbled across the street to the "House of Commons" to get a little medical substance to remove freckles.

"Yes, sir! Make a man's word as good as his bond—that's me. Thank God, I'll never be on the jury, for I've formed an opinion, and expressed it too; and if that ain't enough, by thunder! I'll send it to 'em by freight. Sure he promised to marry her. Did you see what was in *The Pick and Shovel* and *The Messmate* this mornin'? Do you suppose for a holy minute that Colonel McAllcash and Judge Relieveyou and—what's the feller's name that's in with them? Let me see. Oh, pshaw! I had it right on the point of my tongue. Smith, Snite, Stith—no, that ain't it. Well, 'tenerate, he's a fine-looker and adds weight and dignity to the firm. They'd never 'a' brung that case 'thout they had a cinch." This kind of jaw-bone was what many husbands had to hear, before, during, and after their meals.

A completely misinformed public seldom knows when and where to cast anchor, and, drifting along the dangerous channel of popular sympathy, it not infrequently loses many of its most valued members, who see the error of their ways and desert the rudderless old hull in time to avoid the final crash, that in the end must overtake all error. These vanguards of civilization, day-dreamers and cranks, are the ones who unclasp the strong-hooped books of reason and take the clamps off the wheels of progress. Thus a small rift was gradually developing in local sentiment, which began to show symptoms of increase; but a decided majority of the district was unalterably for the fair plaintiff.

Now, while this sensational straw was being threshed in the

popular mind, court came on apace, as courts are wont to do; the Circuit Court, the court of common law and equity jurisdiction; the law's hopper, into which the people pour their grist of grievances, pay a big toll, and take away their grief; the crusher and rolls that pulverize the refractory ore-bearing stones and give value to their metallic substances. Cases after cases were called, continued, stipulated, dismissed, went over for the term, demurred to or tried; finally the case of Van Noggle against Bruce was called, and both sides answered, "Ready." After the usual amount of picket-line skirmishing, a jury of twelve men "good and true" were sworn to "well and truly try the issues between the plaintiff and defendant and a verdict render according to the law and evidence," *et cætera*.

It is wholly impossible at this late date for the writer to make from memory an abstract of the record, or even an approximately correct transcript of the proceedings had in this case; but some of its noticeable features are so deeply furrowed in memory that quite an amount of them will be related. After reading the petition, which charged everything chargeable and claimed all things claimable, Judge Relieveyou made the opening statement to the jury in behalf of the plaintiff.

He said he realized to the fullest extent the grave, solemn, weighty, and momentous duty devolved upon him and his co-counselors in the arduous preparation and trial of this important case; important not alone to his client, her relatives, friends, and attorneys, but of the supremest importance to each and every citizen in the whole country, whatever his or her station in life might be, however high or low, from the shiftless hobo to the most lordly citizen in all the land; each, all, and every one had a sociological, just, and indefeasible interest, in fee simple, in the correct, lawful, and fair termination of this controversy.

"Now, if the court please," said Mr. Howe, defendant's

attorney, "I object to the language of plaintiff's counsel. First, for the reason that this is not a criminal nor a quasi-criminal case, nor is the whole country interested in its termination; and secondly, for the reason that counsel for plaintiff is out of the record in stating things that are wholly inadmissible at this time, and never will be received, allowed, or admitted in evidence at this trial. Let him tell what he expects to prove and will be allowed to prove; that, and that only, is all that he can be allowed to allude to in his opening remarks to this jury."

The Court: "The objection is sustained. Gentlemen, please confine your remarks in this case to what you expect to prove."

Continuing, Judge Relieveyou said: "Gentlemen, we expect to show you by direct testimony that Heck Bruce has made promises of marriage to the plaintiff in this case which he is bound in honor, conscience, and law to fulfill, or pay the damages she has sustained by reason of his non-fulfillment; it will be in testimony from the lips of plaintiff, and from other unimpeachable sources, that Bruce has repeatedly promised to marry her; that on two, if not three, occasions the day was set, fixed, and agreed upon for the wedding, and each time it was postponed at his request; that he had her write letters to her relatives and friends, telling them of her approaching marriage, and as a final wind-up of the whole affair, he went to St. Louis and remained there or somewhere for ten days or two weeks, not even condescending to write his intended bride a line telling her his whereabouts or his intentions. Now, gentlemen, if we show you these things and convince you that they are true, which I am more than confident we will do, then it will be your plain duty, under your oaths and under the instructions that will be given you by the judge of this court, to find a verdict for the plaintiff in any sum not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars."

Mr. Howe, of counsel for the defendant, then told the jury what he expected to prove as a defense to the suit. "Our defense, gentlemen," said he, will be a plain, straight, unvarnished denial of every allegation in plaintiff's petition contained. Mr. Bruce will contradict, under oath and publicly on this witness-stand, every assertion, every declaration, and every affirmation in her petition. It is not meet at this time for me to say by whom and through what agencies we will make this defense; suffice it to say that it will be made, and made along the lines I have told you—an unqualified denial. Mr. Bruce's testimony will be corroborated by a chain of circumstances, every link, hook, and swivel of which he is willing that a jury of his neighbors may test to their content. It is needless to state that we ask your united attention. I hope that every eye will be watchful and vigilant, every ear active and alert, and every man on this jury do his best to render a just and righteous verdict for the right party in this contention."

The weather was dry and sultry, the court-house packed full; the populace were still trying the case, as they had been ever since it found lodgment in the office of the clerk of the Circuit Court, and now they were reinforced by the newspapers (which, of course, were excluded from the jury). The plaintiff's evidence was given with extraordinary skill; as a brief history of a concrete and continuous little love-affair, it was a masterpiece. Howe objected frequently during the first part of her examination to what lawyers are pleased to call inadmissible, irrelevant, immaterial, suggestive, and leading questions; sometimes sustained, often overruled by the court; finally his vigilance slackened. "Let it all come in," he said to plaintiff's attorney; "we'll not stint, weigh, or measure anything; we'll just lump it off. She wants to tell it so bad that it looks sinful to stop her. Tie a Frenchman's hands and he cannot talk;

but when that woman's tongue is well tied, there'll be a long line of vehicles going slow behind her."

While her examination-in-chief was a capital performance, it may well be said that on cross-examination she stood as did the men of General Thomas Jonathan Jackson at the crest of Bull Run Hill, Virginia, on that memorable July morning in 1861, a veritable "stone wall," under a cross-fire that lasted for hours and hours. She rehearsed in detail the many conversations, the long railroad trips, the Sunday afternoon rides, church-going, theater-going, and almost everything that Bruce had said to her in the two or three years prior to the commencement of this action. Not a stage-setting or property was left out—hammocks, sofas, davenports, double settees, and such; not once did she falter, have tongue-failure, or *forgetitis* (a convenient disease, often contracted on the witness-stand). She also remembered that she had been married twice, but had disagreed with both her husbands; was an actress when she left the two; had been the owner of a show on the road, but failed.

The most material element in many a lawsuit is the witnesses' inability to recollect on cross-examination, and many are the lawyers whose energies have been exhausted and the consuming powers of time have written wrinkles in their rosy cheeks and changed the lustrous locks of their youth to the snowy crowns of old age trying to get witnesses say to something other than "I can't recollect," "I don't remember"; and the wonder is why Justice, symbolized by the blindfolded goddess with scales and sword, has permitted witnesses on cross-examination to cripple and stultify our system of judicature from behind fortifications of an assumed faulty memory. If all the important things that a witness cannot remember on cross-examination were added together and their total subtracted from the unimportant ones that he did remember in his direct testimony, and that sum divided by the number of

jurors trying the cause, with a twenty-five per cent discount for wear, tear, cooerage, and self-interest also deducted, the power of determining justice in legal trials would be immeasurably augmented.

The above digressive suggestion applies in full force to the array of witnesses introduced by plaintiff. They either know too much or too little in their direct examination, or on cross-examination they could not recollect. There were two expert doctors, or doctor-experts—the reader may adopt whichever term sounds best; I fear that neither will contribute very abundantly towards a lasting rhetorical bouquet. There were three or four lady friends, one very pretty girl, one hotel-keeper (a Yankee), two colored porters, two cab-drivers, one liveryman, one policeman, one preacher, one promoter, and Blinkins, president and general manager of the Home Detective Agency; he who, as custodian of the public morals and constable of the township, had prosecuted “Monkey-wrench” and had lost the case, a long time ago.

Blinkins was a deep-dyed, up-to-date stinkard—a grafter, liar, villain, thief, through and through, up and down, across and back; and with all of this and these, he had less virtue than a barnyard fowl, and would stick a friend or foe day or night for a very little piece of money. There are a great many detectives. There are a great, great many Blinkinses. The Burrelson family, of Texas, is said to be the largest in the United States—about twelve hundred voters of the direct and collateral kindred, and good, honorable people; but numerically they merit no comparison with the Blinkinses. After these and two or three other off-suit witnesses, and the reading of three or four depositions from Peoria, or Boozetown, Illinois, the plaintiff rested her case.

Maybe we had better go back a few stations and inspect the track and road-bed over which plaintiff’s train of witnesses

had traveled. The pretty-girl witness before mentioned didn't know Bruce, had only seen him once, and that was in the night-time and his back toward her. She was evidently introduced for effect, and certain it is she did the part well; a tall, unassuming, cheerful brunette, neatly dressed, with a mesmeric voice, blooming, lovable, peachy, two rows of partly exposed pearly teeth intensified in grace by their carnation-lipped enclosure, glowing as the noon sunshine, dimple-set, rose-tinted cheeks that speak the language of every age and every tongue and breathes into the very *ego* of every man the same thought, the same desire, the same hope, the same nameless longing that filled Maud Muller's breast and yours and mine, a longing that will not shorten, a hope that will not blight, a desire that never comes to nought, and a burning and feverish thought that nothing can ever stop except a stiff kiss.

The doctors knew that defendant acted as the man of the house at plaintiff's home, and also paid them something like three hundred dollars for an operation the previous summer on plaintiff's little daughter for appendicitis, a fake that had then supplanted the tapeworm graft on account of its aristocratic origin and the price of the goods, but, fortunately for humanity, only held the boards a few years and was rapidly overthrown by other *itises*, germs, microbes. and ptomaine poisoning. It may be possible that General Sherman was thinking about medicinal quackery when he defined war.

The three lady friends of the plaintiff were what is known in court-house parlance as "character witnesses." When their testimony was all in, Mrs. Van Noggle's deportment and chastity, on a scale of one hundred, would have averaged about ninety and nine and then some. Mace told a little crowd that night, who were in a game of high five, that their testimony reminded him of a promotor friend of his, who the year before was booming a health resort in Colorado, known as the original

"fountain of youth" springs. "I ran on to him," Mace continued, "one day last summer in Kansas City. He said: 'Melwin, I will put every drug store in a thousand miles of me on the bum before three years; I can beat 'em an open mile and hold up my best foot. There's no sickness that my springs won't cure, and do it quick. A patient don't have to blow in a good mine, or a farm, nor stay half a life-time either—in four or five weeks we'll renovate any old rounder and make him better'n he ever was. Why, the Rocky Mountain dope stores and doctors can read their doom in the countenances of my patients going home from the springs; they have jobbed me, or tried to—sent a number of their so-called incurables, even went to Chicago and got the worst old fiend alive and sent her out. Oh my! cocaine, morphine, ether, chloroform, chloral, and all other drug dopes. 'Did your spring water do her any good?' said I. 'Did it do her any good?' he continued. 'Well, I should remark. In less than five weeks she left the springs a spotless virgin.' "

The colored porters, the cab-drivers, and the liverymen knew nothing about a promise of marriage between the parties litigant; the policeman, preacher, and promoter were not introduced. It was never quite clear why these three were left out, but strange things happen in love and war, and the case on trial savored of both. The hotel-keeper did all he could for the plaintiff, but on cross-examination he too fell to forgetting, and in the final show-down his forgettings and rememberings just about broke even.

Going down stairs that noon, Bruce said to Howe: "That damn Yankee has been mad at me for years, because I said he had a prize strain of Plymouth Rock bed-bugs in his old bunkery."

Blinkins, the captain, mate, pilot, and deck-hands of the Home Detective Agency, was an indispensable witness for the

plaintiff. He testified that he had stayed all night once the summer previous at plaintiff's boarding-house, and had overheard a conversation between her and Bruce, in which Bruce had promised to marry her; it was like this:

Answer: "Yes, sir; I was as wide awake then as we both are now."

Questions by Mr. Howe:

Q. "Did you retire early that night?"

A. "No, sir; not until after the show."

Q. "What show?"

A. "I don't remember the name, but it was a railroad circus."

Q. "Did you go?"

A. "Yes, sir."

Q. "Did Bruce and Mrs. Van Noggle go?"

A. "I think they did."

Q. "Now what time that night did the conversation take place between plaintiff and defendant, in which he promised to marry her, and in what part of her house?"

A. "I think about eleven o'clock, and the talk was made in her parlor and the alcove adjoining it."

Q. "Did you hear all the conversation?"

A. "Yes, sir; I never went to sleep until a long time after Bruce went upstairs to his room."

Q. "Where were you when you heard the conversation?"

A. "What conversation?"

Howe: "The only conversation we are talking about and the one you told of in your examination-in-chief this morning."

A. "Me, I was in the bed-room next to the parlor."

Q. "Did anyone else occupy the room with you?"

A. "No, sir."

Q. "Now, you please tell this jury all the conversation that you heard that night—and you say you heard it all—between plaintiff and defendant."

A. "Well, as I said this morning, I came in about eleven o'clock. It was very warm; I raised the transom between my bed-room and the parlor; in a few minutes Mr. Bruce and Mrs. Van Noggle came in and commenced to talk; Bruce said that if they were ever going to marry, he thought it was about time. She said something about getting ready. He replied that he'd been ready for more than a year, and they made it up to marry the next week in Carthage and go to Denver on a wedding-trip."

Q. "Well, what else did they say?"

A. "That's about all I heard."

Q. "Were you sober?"

A. "Yes, sir; I don't drink."

Q. "Do you ever drink?"

A. "No, sir; I never do. I've no use for liquor or anyone who drinks it."

Q. "Now, Mr. Blinkins, I'll ask you if you have any interest in the termination of this suit?"

A. "No, sir, none on earth."

Q. "Did you ever talk to Mrs. Van Noggle about it?"

A. "Yes, sir."

Q. "When?"

A. "About a week or ten days after she brought the suit."

Q. "Where did you have the talk with her?"

A. "At her home."

Q. "Did she send for you to come and see her about this case?"

A. "I don't remember whether she did or not."

Q. "Well, how did you come to be there? did you volunteer your services?"

A. "I don't recollect whether I did or not."

Q. "Did you ever tell anybody about hearing this conversation between plaintiff and defendant?"

A. "No, sir—not until suit had been brought."

Q. "Who did you tell then?"

A. "Oh, I don't know who all; I talked with lots of people about it."

Q. "Well, name some of them."

A. "I can't remember who all they were."

Q. "Then name one of them."

A. "Well, I talked with McGuire about it."

Q. "You mean 'Squire' McGuire?"

A. "Yes, sir."

Q. "Where is McGuire now?"

A. "I think he's prospecting in Arizona."

Bruce whispered something to Howe.

Q. "You're a good friend of McGuire?"

A. "Oh! yes—as far as I know."

Q. "Did you talk with him many times about this breach of promise case?"

A. "No, not often."

Q. "How long has Mr. McGuire been out West?"

A. "About two years."

Bruce, who showed signs of intoxication, was sworn and took the stand in his own behalf; he contradicted nearly every-

thing that the plaintiff testified to. In regard to her alleged marriage contract or agreement, he said that no such talk was ever had between them; said he had repeatedly told her he wouldn't marry the best woman on earth under any conceivable circumstances, and if he had to do so or go to his grave, he wouldn't be as long making up his mind which he'd do as a flash of lightning would lie on a limb, and that nothing within the confines of reality or the realms of imagination could ever induce him to reconsider that resolution; said he had often told the plaintiff what he was then telling the jury; that she understood his position perfectly; he also testified that he had boarded at her house, in all, about thirty months; paid her forty dollars per month; had given her a piano and paid a five-hundred-dollar drug and doctor bill for her little daughter; besides, he had loaned her about eight hundred dollars, which he regarded as a permanent investment. He refused to let her have one hundred and a half ten days before suit was brought. She hadn't paid the eight hundred dollars or any part of it, and never intended to, although she said she would and gave him her promissory notes for that amount, and if it wore out, she'd give him another one. He met her first in a grocery store, where he bought cigars; she asked him to board with her; said she needed the money; he never took her to the circus as Blinkins said he did; he remembered well that he was drunk that night and didn't go. Had two free tickets the advance agent gave him for posters on the Seventh Street side of the shop, but he gave them to Ike, his helper; said he never slept at plaintiff's house while he boarded there, or any other time, but slept upstairs over his shop. Said this was the first case he ever had in court; admitted he was worth over four hundred thousand dollars.

His cross-examination was carried to some length; Bruce answered only the interrogatories whose answers he knew

were the whole truth and nothing but the truth, never volunteering any information or explanation unless it was indispensably necessary.

Ike, the helper, then testified for the defendant; he remembered that Bruce gave him complimentary circus tickets; that he and an acquaintance went to the show at night; that Bruce was pretty well organized (drunk) before show-time and by no means sober next morning; said he knew the reputation of Bruce in the neighborhood where he lived for truth and veracity; that it was good. It was brought out in his cross-examination that plaintiff came to the shop to see Bruce several times, getting money from him. When Bruce was out, she seldom spoke to witness; he said that suited him first rate; he had no more use for her than a Comanche Indian had for the President's message; admitted it had been his supreme delight to let her know on several occasions that she didn't look good to him.

Five prominent citizens were next introduced—two miners, one banker, one merchant, and one farmer, all of whom testified that Bruce's reputation for truth and veracity in the community where he had lived continuously for more than twenty years was good; after which the defendant rested his case.

The court gave three instructions to the jury—one for the plaintiff, one for the defendant, and one of its own motion.

They read something like the following:

For the Plaintiff.

“The court instructs the jury that if you find and believe from all the evidence in this case that Heck Bruce, the defendant, promised and agreed to and with the plaintiff, at any time within three years next before the beginning of this suit, that he would marry her, according to the laws of this State to make her his lawfully wedded wife, and that plaintiff was

willing to marry defendant at that time and has ever since been and is now willing so to do, and that afterwards he, the said defendant, failed and refused to marry her and still fails and refuses so to do, then your verdict should be for the plaintiff, and her damages should be assessed by you in any sum not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars."

For the Defendant.

"The jury is instructed that unless you find and believe from all the evidence in this case that Heck Bruce, the defendant, promised and agreed to marry plaintiff at any time within three years next before the commencement of this suit, then your verdict should be for the defendant."

By the Court.

"The jury is instructed that you are the sole judges of all the testimony in this case, and in determining the weight and credibility that should be given to any witness, you have a right to take into consideration his or her interest, if any, in said case, his or her demeanor, conduct, and manner in testifying, and if you believe that any witness has sworn falsely to any one material fact in issue, then you have the right to reject the whole or any part of such witness' testimony."

One hour was allowed by the court to each side, in which to argue the case.

Judge Relieveyou, who had made the opening statement at the beginning of the trial, consumed one-half hour, followed by Mr. Howe, for the defendant; one hour after which Colonel McAllcash closed the case.

Plaintiff's attorney sought to produce the impression on the minds of the jurors that all the circumstances in the case corroborated Mrs. Van Noggle's testimony; that the defendant was a drunken old saloon bum, wholly unreliable; that he fixed and made future dates in which to get drunk, and religiously

kept his appointments; it was in evidence from his own lips that he was drunk, and substantiated by the evidence of his own witnesses. "Day and night and night and day," continued Judge Relieveyou, "Bruce has been tanked up for years and years; he admits it, almost boasts of it, and brings in his drunken and debauched condition to prove an alibi. Will you, gentlemen of this jury, upon your sacred honors, under your oaths as members of this court, the only bulwark of all the people, the last and only screen and shelter to protect the weak and expose the vile and vicious—I say, will you consider such clumsy, benumbed, stupid, torpid, and unreliable testimony and set it up against her, whose every word is in and of itself truth personified, whose character, habits, person, and constitution are so morally governed that she could not swear falsely if she would? No, no! Ten thousand times no! She couldn't perjure herself in this or any other case."

* * * * *

Howe confined his argument in the main to the issues joined in the pleadings; step by step he classified, analyzed, examined; his sole aim, he said, was to help the jury bundle and basket up the perjury that had been committed at this trial and lay its illegitimate carcass in broad daylight on the doorstep where it originated, so that the shameless little offspring of contradictions could be located and identified.

"All sensible men, all honest men, all reasonable men must admit that some one or more of these witnesses have committed willful, deliberate, and unqualified perjury; that perjurious testimony has been lugged into this case is uncontradictable; such a contention would not be entitled to the charity of a passing doubt; the most mentally weak and feeble-minded persons that breathe would know at a glance that all this testimony is not true; it can not be true. Some—yea, much of it is false. I say it is too indefinite, thin, vague, and forceless to denom-

inate it perjury, a false-swearing, and such easy, mild, gentle, and undreaded terms. I say in unison with counsel for plaintiff, 'No, ten thousand times no!' Far better call such slop and smut by its true, unmistakable American name; that's much easier to spell and pronounce than *perjury*.

"Gentlemen of the jury, let's see, if possible, who or which one is guilty of this wrong-doing, this long-range, reckless, and negligent swearing; let's try them with finer eyes. Maybe we can discern the side upon which is corded up the greatest amount of self-interest; if so, then it follows that most truth will be found in the other end of the scale. Going back three short years of their respective biographies, we find an unacquainted man and woman thrown together by haphazard, met by mere accident at a grocery store where he bought his cigars—and there's no evidence that he didn't pay for them; the first thing that dawned upon her resourceful intellectuality was to ask this old man a favor.

" 'Come board at my house.'

" 'How much?'

" 'Ten dollars a week.'

" 'Pretty high, but I'll be there.'

" 'Do you want a room and bed?'

" 'No; I sleep upstairs at my shop, get drunk occasionally, as opportunity offers, and don't like to bother people when I'm drinking.'

"He's not a total abstainer like Blinkins, the trusted guardian of a nation's welfare; Blinkins, president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, solicitor, and general manager of the Home Detective Agency, an institution that has been so prolific of *results* in all our States when spelled r-e-w-a-r-d-s—the same number of letters, but not all the same kind. Yes, he gets drunk, good and drunk, and does something else, too, besides getting drunk—he tells the truth. There is an old home-made

proverb which says that 'children, fools, and drunken men tell the truth'; gentlemen, that's a common fact—a valuable maxim of wisdom. As much as I revere sobriety, as much as I advocate temperance, as much as I love habitual soberness, still I am compelled to confess that there's a gallon of clean and unadulterated truth in every quart of good whisky when properly rationed out.

"It has been said that a very meddlesome would-be statesman once informed our first assassinated President that one of his generals had been about half-drunk during a long and successful campaign. 'Ah! too bad, too bad!' replied Mr. Lincoln. 'Something must be done; therefore I will at once appoint you envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to ascertain the brand of whisky General Grant has been drinking for the last six months or more. I want to send him ten barrels of it.'

"Sobriety is a wonderfully good thing, but it's like salt, it isn't good by itself. Prohibition may be a good thing, but it's never been tried. Sobriety coupled with only a self-appointed and self-anointed private detective is not entitled to a pinnacle-place in our admiration.

"What next? He paid her in round numbers twelve hundred dollars for thirty months' board, gave her a piano, paid a drug and doctor bill of five hundred dollars, and loaned her eight hundred dollars on her notes. On her notes—think of that, gentlemen. You know full well those notes are waste paper and all her talk about paying them is idle bombast. Again, does his conduct look like that of a promise-breaker? Do men guilty of breach in their promises lavishly bestow gifts upon those with whom they break faith? I think not, and I think that you think not.

* * * * *

"Gentlemen, do you believe candidly, way down in your hearts, that plaintiff wants to marry this defendant, this

drunken old man nearing his allotted threescore and ten years? Has Master Cupid, the denuded little love-maker, lingered about the smouldering embers of the forge at defendant's shop till 'the wee small hours of the night' and then let fly his keen and piercing love-steeped darts in the direction of her boarding-house, disturbing her private tranquillity by small punctures of the snowy cuticle in the location of her lovely heart? or has Puck, that mighty monarch of mirth, glided on angelic wings into her elaborately appointed private rooms—paid for with defendant's money—and softly, tenderly, placidly whispered thrilling and delightful sentences filled with new-born affection into her modest ears? Has she been flim-flammed and hoodooed by these unmanageable little deities, who are subject to arrest at any moment for indecent exposure? Has she been beguiled, betrayed, imposed upon, and deceived by these and this indescribable something she calls in her petition 'outraged feelings,' thrust as a burden upon her, augmenting her stock of troubles and tragedies twenty-five thousand dollars' worth? Is it love, pure, old-fashioned, tailor-made love, woven to wear, cut to fit, and fadeth not out? or is it a gigantic financial opportunity that looms up before her so vividly in the distance? Is it love? or is it this [holding up a silver dollar] that she wants you, and each of you, to multiply by twenty-five thousand and then subtract that sum total from this old man's money, giving the amount to her? She'll then play a lone hand. She'll do the 'Coal Oil Johnny' act to a fulsome finish. Is it the outbreak of sweet girlish passion that inspired her to supplicate, implore, and pray for the amount of money mentioned in this petition, a soul-absorbing desire for sweet conjugal love, requited love that hangs

'About the necks of bottled bliss,
Whose lips await the famished kiss,'

or is it an insatiable craving for current coin? Does she mos_t

desire a marriage license issued to her and the defendant, or a private monetary pipe-line running from his bank account into hers, to furnish fuel, fresh fuel, for the furnace of her depleted treasury, so she'd have money to burn, so to speak? Does she want a marriage certificate? If she does, it should have detachable coupons, so that when she gets tired of her spouse, foot-sore and limb-weary in double harness, she can cut off a little *divorcette* and be as single and unmarried as in the days of her rubber rings and rattle-boxes. She has two husbands running at large now, and wants another one perhaps. She has tried hard to get one, failed, and now wants a bounty on account of that failure—not from the State or Nation, but from a private citizen, who owes her nothing—less than nothing. A man who never before had a case in court, although worth more than half a million dollars; a man who has always compromised his differences where it could be done with honor, but in a suit for breach of promise, where the promise was never made, any kind of compromise is dishonorable. Maybe she wants some good angel to stake her to another show on the road, so she can pose—pardon my new word, but you and I, gentlemen, have as much right to coin words as anyone—so she can pose as actorine instead of hashologist.

“I said in my opening statement that I hoped you would, at the conclusion of this trial, bring in a just and righteous verdict for the right party in this controversy. Let me again urge that request. There's far more in this defense than passion, feelings, or sentiment. My contention is not wind—that's on the other side; it is atmospheric wholly. I know that plaintiff's attorneys are very windy, still I do not believe they can stir up a breeze strong enough and stiff enough to blow this jury out of its head and off of its feet. I do not believe

they can stampede you into a verdict with only sympathy and sentiment.

* * * * *

“I desire, moreover, to be charitable as well as honest, and here and now admit and confess that I do not believe plaintiff’s lawyers conspired with her to impose a pecuniary penalty upon my client. No indeed, I do not. On behalf of them and myself, I absolve them from any such charge. In this, as in a vast majority of lawsuits, the attorneys loaded their fowling-pieces only with such ammunition as was furnished by the litigants. Take this evidence, all of it, as it is, to your jury-rooms, deliberate on it fully, winnow it out, separate the chaff from the grain, the false from the true, the forged from the genuine, let the unvexed sunshine of a truth-seeking tribunal emit every luminous ray possible upon these countercurrents of testimony, according to your lights; and when you shall have concluded your deliberations, let me again indulge the hope that the result of such finding will be a complete vindication, a verdict for the defendant.”

At the conclusion of Howe’s address it was evident that a great task lay before anyone who undertook to destroy its influence with that jury. This was made more manifest as Colonel McAllcash was closing the case, for at least three-fourths of the audience left the court-room. The utmost indifference of the jury to what he was saying soon convinced the Colonel that the plaintiff had run a slow race. He finished, however, with a magniloquent appeal for sympathy, dwelling at length upon the sanctity of marriage promises. He made one or two futile attempts to refute Howe’s argument, but the far-away look of the jurors satisfied him that most of them had their minds fully made up one way or the other, and, judging from their inattention, the chances were largely in favor of the other; and so the case that had been the all-absorbing topic for

days, weeks, and months in the local newspapers, and even in the metropolitan dailies, and that had been "hashed and rehashed" in the family circles, at clubs, lodges, churches, and on the lips of every gossip, had now become so shrivelled up that it required small exertion to squeeze it out through the little end of the tattler's horn, and deliver it over to a sworn and supposedly honest jury, so they could weigh the reasons for and against, thus furnishing an illuminative example of the most modern methods of the equal and even-handed distribution of justice.

The jury had not retired ten minutes until Bruce received the following telegram:

"BISBEE, ARIZONA, July 23, ———.

"If you lose, ask rehearing. New evidence. Letter follows. McGUIRE."

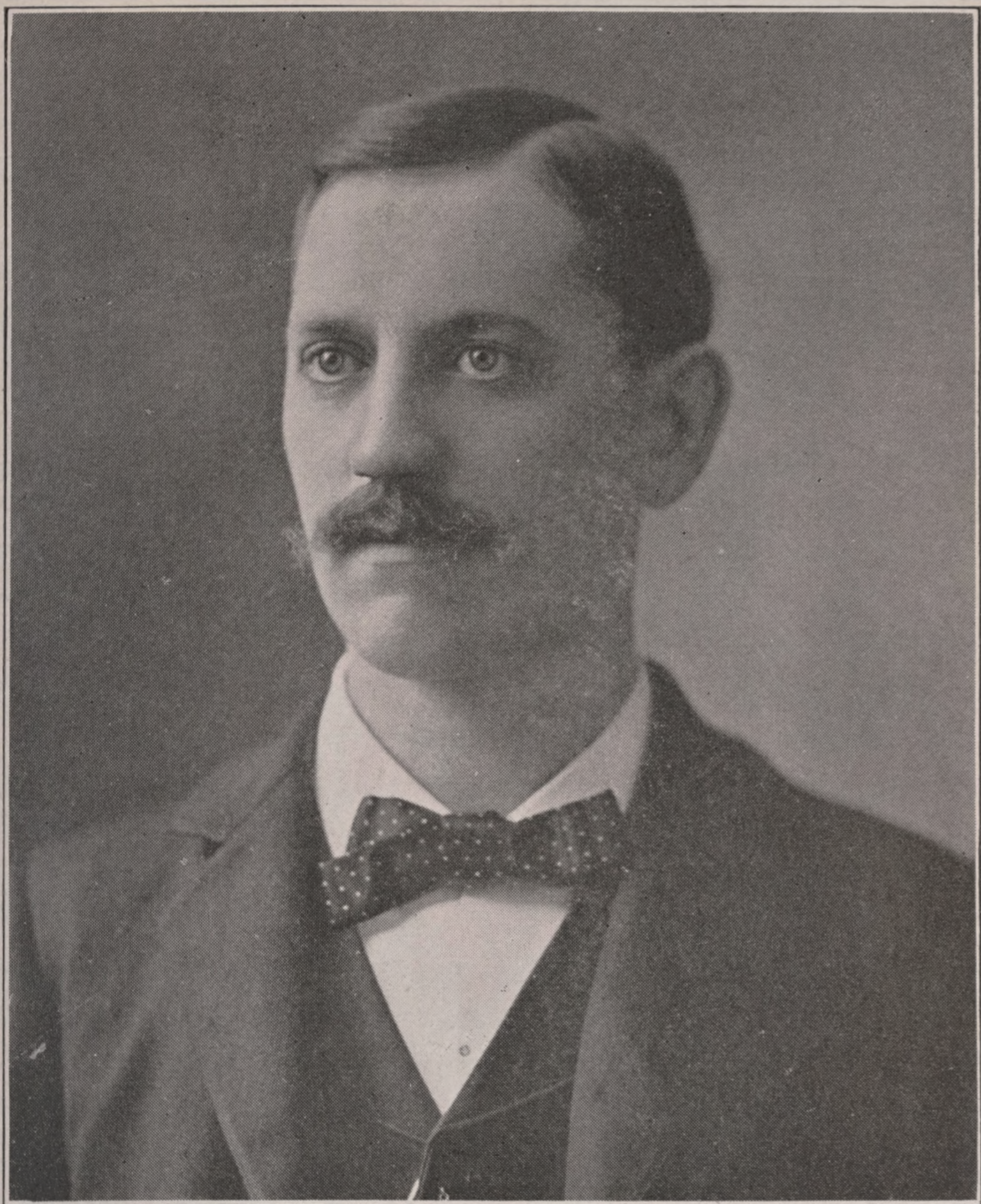
The condition of local sentiment was well reflected by an editorial appearing two days later in *The Miners' Messmate*. This we get from an old copy, and give it verbatim.

"MONETARY HYDROPHOBIA.

"That we never get too old to learn is a live wire *The Messmate* believes will forever hold its electric current. The termination of the first inning in the Van Noggle-Bruce trial this morning, after two days and nights deliberation with a hung jury (eleven to one for the defendant), again convinces us that many games are never out till they are played; like the old sister in Connecticut, whose brother, a Universalist minister from out West, had been convinced by reading from the Holy Book itself that all and everybody would ultimately be saved, hove a deep sanctimonious sigh and then said: 'Brother, Scripture never sounded that way to me before; it looks like you were right about eternal damnation, but I had hoped and prayed for better things.' And, although we had tried the case two or three times in these columns and always found the

issue for the plaintiff, when it was finally tried according to the rules of law and the admissibility of testimony, we had hoped that she wouldn't get a look in; it appears, however, that one man on the jury was asleep or heeded not the obligation of his oath. Everything now indicates that the whole play was a cold-blooded shake-down from billboards to moving pictures, with only one thing in view by the plaintiff, to-wit: the increase of box receipts. She had been playing quite a winning little game with old man Bruce and his money, and all of a sudden, while her luck was good, desired to remove the limit and play her cards hard and high up.

"We now apologize to our readers as gracefully and penitently as we have ever learned how for our miscue, and want to assure them, one and all, that in the future, when large damage suits are instituted in these parts, we will endeavor to keep the burden of proof on the plaintiff, where it legally and rightfully belongs, until it has been shifted elsewhere by lawful means beyond a reasonable doubt. Six months ago, to the ordinary newspaper-reader, her petition looked like a sub-clause of the Ten Commandments or a meteoric exhalation from the Golden Rule; to-day it is invisible to the naked eye and growing smaller by such leaps and bounds that, in our opinion, it will not have a place or a call on the judge's bar docket next term of court. We are perfectly willing to help pull stumps like we did when a boy over on Cream Ridge Farm, but when it comes to limb-pulling, we'll have to ask that our hands be passed up."



LEWIS CASS HOWE
Lawyer

CHAPTER XVII.

“Joy hides behind the solemn eyes
Of Sorrow in her darkest hours,
As underneath the snow there lies
The promise of a thousand flowers.”

Dame Rumor sometimes takes a short afternoon nap, reclining upon the downy divan in the aft of her sumptuously appointed launch. In these *siestas* she is liable to drift far into the dangerous and disappointing shoals of Salt River, lose her bearings, get the time-card ripped and rent, hither and yon, and the dickens is to pave and no pitch hot; but however bad or blameworthy her faults, and their name is legion, idleness is never catalogued as one of them; asleep or awake, rain or shine, cold or hot, in season or out of season, she's always on the go. This was the state of affairs in the early autumn after the litigation mentioned in our last chapter. Current events had it that Quita Long was about to become the bride of an Eastern capitalist, who was a regular caller at the Long mansion, and from all surface indications was high man; he and she missed nothing along the line of attractions that were going on, frequently accompanied by the other daughters and their mother. Tarver's calls began to decrease in number and wane in duration, and finally discontinued altogether. He still lived with Mace out at Tenttown, as he called it; but since we last mentioned him, he had been admitted to practice law, and the firm was at this time Howe & Tarver.

There was no known authority for its truth, but Rumor had it that Howe would soon be superseded by another attorney in the management of the Long properties; some sort of a secret, intangible, and mysterious coldness was growing up that was fast developing symptoms from seedtime to harvest; no

cement, concrete, granitoid, or any other glutinous substance has ever been manufactured that will prevent this kind of information from seeping through it, and, whether going slow as the shadow on a sun-dial or at a lightning velocity, it never encounters a non-conductor; the wires may be broken, crossed, or snowed under, that doesn't hinder its flight, for almost any object may be pressed into service as a transmitter—a clothes-line, a grape-vine, a wire fence, or any old thing will act as perfectly as a submarine cable. The Chipmunk people were the first to know, or pretend to know, that the trouble caldron was beginning to simmer, and they also knew it would be the sweetest dish on the bill of fare to an envious many, who gulp such innutritious morsels with more relish than any meat; financial jealousy cuts no small figure in this kind of disturbances, which always find ready hands and willing tongues to push them along; opportunities are seldom missed to give bad tidings prominent space and preferential consideration. Mace was much exercised on account of the lukewarmness between Mrs. Long, her advisers, and Howe. He frequently made it convenient to be at the law offices; he, Tarver, and Howe would lunch together, and it was no secret with them that business relations between that firm and the Longs would soon terminate.

"I don't like that one dang little bit," said Mace one Saturday afternoon, as the three were seated in an oyster-house. "Mrs. Long should come out boldly and say to your face why she don't want to make the loan. You say the security is well worth three times what the owner wants to borrow on it, and certainly her cash don't increase any while on deposit; bankers are not breeders of money. She told me a month ago she had over twenty thousand dollars in the bank earning nothing, and now you say she has turned down that loan. I think this Eastern capitalist has hankerings to finger that pie; he wants

to get his ice-hooks fastened to some of that Long money, and if he does, it's my opinion he'll hold to it like a snapping-turtle in a drouth; these ducks in laced boots and corduroy trousers playing capitalist with a million dollars behind them, as a rule, haven't a cent anywhere else; 'Twouldn't surprise me if he marries Quita and incidentally manages the whole cheese. I tried my double best more than two years ago to blow our friend Tarver here up to a welding heat; it now looks like I've lost out. I worked time and a half all summer dinning that old 'faint heart and fair lady' doctrine at him till I got dead tired, called for my time, and quit."

Mace's remarks started a three-cornered conversation, in which he and Howe were pitted against Tarver, checkmating, flanking, and surrounding every move the boy tried to make.

"But I think I can show where both of you are in error," said Tarver after their talk had warmed up. "I happen not to be in the grand-stand business; that is a separate trade of its own, same as painting or plumbing, and besides, it's a vocation that everybody can follow. I'm short on red tape and dress parade—don't believe I could learn to play to the galleries in a thousand years; one must have a congenital ability for that kind of work, or he's no good; it isn't in my makeup. The dice won't roll that way for me; I don't care how square they are or how fair they're thrown, I can't cover up my unfavorableness. I was intended in the raw material to be a non-magnetized open-face; I have tested and tried my adjustability along that line to a fare-you-well, and found that I haven't any. The leopard can change his spotted dress-coat as easily as I can play a double role; I just must be my own simple self."

"*Simple* is the very word to use; nothing better expresses it," rejoined Mace. If we were all so unalterable as you claim to be, I can't imagine what in the H would become of the whole blooming pack; I believe in set rules of conduct, and am so

governed myself, but there are blasted few things so fixed as to preclude changes. There are times when, for diplomacy's sake, I suspend some of my rules, take cautious soundings, and go it alone."

"And I'm willing to suspend mine too," replied Tarver; "but the day will never dawn that'll find me on my knees wife-hunting; my devotional bumps might favor such a course of conduct, but they are in a pestiferous minority; the remainder of my make-up would mutiny. That's what the matter with these hypocritical times now, and why the divorce dockets are brimfull all the time; young men promise everything from Hades to Haw River before they are married, and after that a year or so, they both wish to high heaven they had the rice and old shoes that friends flung after them."

"You're generalizing," Howe led off. "Mace's remarks had reference only to one case, the one so near home. It may not be my butt-in, for I confess I've set an abominably poor example by my own conduct up to date, but I believe if you will keep good tab on all the facts, you will find there are as many first love miss-matches as any other kind. My shallow experience tells me that both parties expect so all-fired much after the marriage novelty taste of the bucket wears off a little that neither tries to make good, and then comes repudiation of ante-nuptial contracts. My friend White says, 'There are more folks married now than have cold grub in the cupboard,' and, by Gosh! there's more truth than poetry in it. I believe the best verdict a young lawyer can possibly win is a good wife with a big roll of money; nineteen out of every twenty of them never get a decent library unless they marry it, or hold some county office one or two terms. You watch that target with both eyes good and strong the remainder of your natural life, and see if I haven't rung the bell nearly every shot. Now, there's a girl, pretty as an Elberta peach, with more than fifty

thousand dollars in her own right, you could have hooked up with long ago in a slow walk. If it were to save my life this good second, I would not say anything against poverty, or those who possess little of this world's goods, but one thing I would impress on you and every other young man alive, and that is, a rich girl is as sweet as a poor one. We criticise and curse the peerage of England for their so-called mercenary matrimonial matches, but in the gradation of commercial crimes they certainly scale much less than many things we do and laugh by them as trifles. You could have gotten her in a slow walk—yes, in a hobble.”

“Of course he could,” Mace spoke up, before the boy had time to reply to Howe; “and I want to re-utter what I have told him a score of times before, that the whole Long family were dead struck on him and he couldn’t or wouldn’t see it, one of the two. Quita had suitors by the wholesale in the past two years, and treated them like step-children all for this boy right here [pointing at Tarver], and he just wouldn’t follow up or close in; says he thinks the whole brimming world full of her, and that she is the prettiest thing in shoe-leather, and all that sort of talk, but does he tell her? I said a bit ago that I had called for my time and quit all this drumming him, but that isn’t the proper thing to do; one should never quit a good cause; nothing so tickles evil-doers as the news that reformers have stacked arms and laid down; the first aid to graft and boodle is the surrender of conscience to caution. No, by the eternal Kerplunks, I’ll not quit! this is my own hobby-horse and I’ll ride him to the track’s end, and in the language of old jaw-bone:

‘If he dies, I’ll tan his skin,
And if he lives, I’ll ride him again.’ ”

“This lad ought to have his skin tanned for being a durned fool,” rejoined Howe. “He learns law and literature

all right enough, but my! he's slow about grasping business sense. I've told him more times than he's got fingers, thumbs, and toes that he ought to play his youth, good looks, and soft Southern dialect for what they're worth; but there is not enough room in a young head for an old brain. True says he's afraid the connubial current of bliss has a Niagara Falls in it a few miles down stream, and it does in some cases—where a shark marries a shirk. We naturally expect surface love to lose some good-sized hunks of its gilt and glitter at times; that is neither here, there, nor elsewhere. We're talking about you and Quita, not grand-standing, red tape, dress parade, or gallery plays; they're all imagination. Don't ford the river until you come to it; be adjustable anyhow. Don't say, 'I can't,' or, 'I'd fail at that.' Throw those words under a switch engine. Every utterance in our language that sounds like 'can't' ought to be expunged from the dictionaries and given a lifetime furlough."

The triangular discourse ended nearly where it began. Mace was compelled to attend to some unfinished business up town, and Howe's appointment to argue a motion at court, which took half the afternoon, left Tarver to hold down the office alone. Between clients and Saturday afternoon odds-and-ends work in the office the boy indulged in many sober and meditative thoughts, some of which may have been suggested at lunch.

"Now, it's clearly evident to me," he muttered to himself in a half-audible whisper, "that those men wouldn't give me any bad advice intentionally. I have as much confidence in them as in my own existence; but to save my neck, if it was in the hangman's halter and ready for the fall of the trap-door, I can't see things as they do. Her, she, Quita, think anything of me? How can that be, when she has apparently let that chap (old enough to be her father) beat my time? Howe and

Uncle Mel don't know that; they both think my want of courage, and not her manifested disfavor, caused our split-up; I've told them both to the contrary, but they contend and believe that it was my timorousness. Well, I'll see. My grandma used to say that 'seeing is believing, but feeling is the naked truth itself.' I'm going to write her another note while this temperamental attitude lasts; spells of this kind come and go, and sometimes they stay gone."

To a young man truly in love Saturday afternoon possesses a latent anticipatory craving that is wholly foreign to all other days in the week; it is then that a boy sees by mental vision his sweetheart in her richest and most lovable attire: the fluffy, gauzy, embroidered Sunday gown; the neat-fitting shoe, free from tawdry trappings, incasing within its leathern confines one of the most worshipful material objects the fancy of man has ever selected upon which to bestow his adoration. Oh for a George du Maurier every generation till time and tide shall be no more, to extol as none but he has ever done the surpassing, marvelous, and extraordinary beauty of the feminine foot! A form may be exact, a face doll-like, hair golden, voice harmonical, language pure, choice, select, methodical, and a countenance possessing not the least trace, sign, or semblance of shame, guilt, or regret; but woman's foot is a perfect work. He feels buoyed up and stimulated by that sympathetic atmosphere which surrounds the one he loves; there is no name for this emotion. In vain have thinkers explored the accumulated pages and traditions of bygone centuries in search for some appellation with which to properly clothe with words that condition of a youth's mind when he says honestly and earnestly: "I love the ground she walks on." This substitute and somewhat overworked sentence is what rhetoricians call metonymy. The productive soil is ostensibly the sole creditor of his affections, when in fact the attraction, charm, allurements,

and delight is that portion of the gentler sex which trips upon old Mother Earth. As he nears the day of rest and recreation the freighted burdens of life's concerns are laid aside for a few hours (until a vigorous enforcement of business rules compels him to again take them up). It was during these hours this Saturday afternoon that True determined to once more press his suit, knowing full well, as he said to himself, "I can do nothing more than fail; millions have done likewise." So he sent her the following letter by messenger:

"September 25, —.

"MISS QUITA LONG, *At Home*:

"*Lady*,—It is in the hope that I may be able to persuade you into a revision of your judgment concerning me that these lines are written and transmitted; this may be the acme of stupidity on my part—I have little or no excuse for so doing and will perhaps have less defense for having done the same. And since the rightfulness of my actions is left to your own will for a decision, it might not be wholly out of place to ask your determinations of some other questions that have been in doubt with me of late. I try hard to be fair, frank, and honest with all humanity (including my own egotistic self), and when I ask the same treatment from you, I hope the common rules of propriety are not thereby in danger of violation. Perchance the questions I propound should be oral and face to face; however, there are valid reasons why they should be written: one can retain in memory much better the things read than heard, and, moreover, you might some day want to refer to this record.

"I desire to ascertain, first, if you were trifling with my affections when, over a year ago, you told me that I was the only man you had ever met who came up to the full measure of what you were going to demand from a life-partner, or, plainly speaking, a husband.

"Second, if that standard of mine has been lowered or lessened, in what way, please, to what extent, and what sin or sins have I committed that I should be cold-shouldered by one whom I worshipped with more zeal and earnestness than this paper could hold though it contained a million folios? Have I

been guilty of some double-edged iniquity to myself and to you (my once sweet *you*), that refuses to reveal itself and fails to develop in me that melancholy emphasis which a clear conscience invariably inspires in all sentient beings? Has Nature slipped a cog in my case, gone out of and beyond her wonted way to violate her own precedents? For surely there should be a something within my mind and memory that would, phoenix-like, rise up from its ashes and inform me. But a conscious innocence is mine; I see it in my waking hours and in dreams; it is my shield and buckler.

“Again, why do you not ask a return of your letters, photos, and other mementoes hitherto entrusted to me? They’ve had the best care and keeping I am able to bestow, as well as the worship of an idolatrous lover; still I fear your tender-heartedness is all that stands in the way of asking their immediate return. No harm can be wrought, however, and certainly none is intended, by quoting from these same letters, the one written on the last anniversary of my birth, in which you say, ‘Your disposition is the best property ever overlooked by an assessor,’ alluding to me making my home in a tent in order to live with the man I love and one who has done so many things for me; and elsewhere, your comment, ‘there seems to be an abundance of moral scarcity among young men hereabouts; this alone accelerates my admiration for you. Yes, I repeat, with renewed emphasis, *for you*, the rose of my eye.’ Now, pray, when and where did that rose lose its tint and luster, and from whence came the bitter and inclement blast that withered its petals?

“Doubtless the course you take in this instance is right; the whole matter might be waved aside by the gentle turn of your hand as a silly love-affair of kids; but, fortunately or unfortunately for me, I am quite a long way down stream from childhood for one of my age, and as for the pleasures of babyhood and boyhood, they were never mine; if there are no joys for me stored up in future niches, truly mine will have been a comfortless existence and my limited stock of felicities will have little added to them from these pages. Quita, I had a right to expect something different than disappointment, the kind that confronts me now, didn’t I?

“And referring to the postscript of your letter to me June 10th, which reads: ‘I am so delighted to know that you are held in such high esteem by so many others besides myself, for they [the girls] out there [alluding to a lawn social, if I remember aright] said you were perfect from head to heels.’ These are your words, your thoughts, not mine; I never uttered or thought them—only read them and read them and read them, kept on reading them, and am reading them now, and would like to read them for ever more, much as I differ with them, for it vexes me beyond measure to calculate the long, long distance between myself and perfection or anything approaching it.

“Let me again indulge an ardent hope in these closing words that the foregoing will be received in the same spirit of mind in which they are sent, and that in making and meaning to make myself fully and fairly understood I have not crossed over the traditional boundary lines that have always been recognized as the lawful limits in affairs of the heart.

“Awaiting some sort of recognition, if aught be due, I am, as ever,

“Very respectfully,

TRUE TARVER.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Oh, me, this weather is a fright! Minnesota, Manitoba, and all the rest of those Northwestern States and Provinces must be emigrating bodily to the Ozarks. Gee whiz! but the way old ‘regulars’ have been playing Bo-peep with red noses around cold corners this morning was a reminder to me from away back; I would do without bracers and chasers till the Johnny-jump-ups come again before I’d brave a blizzard like this to fire and fall back in any old gin-joint. It must be as cold as that winter when ‘Davy Crockett’ married Angy McLudd. Great gay odd! We danced every night till the middle of April to keep from freezing off the roost; and wore out all the fiddlers from Spring River to the Arkansas line furnishing music, and a devilish poor kind it was at that; many’s the time I’ve seen the lead violinist poke his left little finger nail up and clip the E string in two, just for a few minutes’ rest. Those were the days of the old pussy strings, before these new-fangled steel wires began to creak their wheezing waltzes and stridulous strains for hugging-matches on the run.”

Such were the expressions of McGuire, on whose face, in every line, dimple, curvature, and turn of the lip or squint of the eye, could be read at a glance his extreme earnestness, showing emphatically that there was more to follow. McGuire has been musing almost all the whole snowy morning. He talked with the easiest ease. Some distinguished writer has said that truth is natural on human lips and flows without effort, while falsehood requires great exertion and constant concentration of thought; measured by this rule, it was evident that he was dealing in facts, or thought he was, as they are picked up along the meandering avenues of life. He would frequently

stop short off and say: "Now, boys, hear me good, for I'm going to give once more an imitation of a man telling the whole truth; that's one commodity I do love to deal out from the shoulder and by the wholesale. Damn this way of making three bites out of one cherry!" Whatever else could be said of McGuire (and there had been many shady things laid at his door, mostly of a lecherous nature), insincerity had never been included in the category of them. He studiously shrank from advertising his bygone amatory exploits, although it was well known to many an old resenter and residentress that he could have related several truthful incidents of an extremely racy and interesting variety.

"I live, like millions of others, under a statute of my own, a law not enacted by one legislative house, that looks like a special detail from a lunatic asylum to the Capitol building; then concurred in later by an august State Senate, most of whom have an amorette conveniently staked out at or near the seat of government; and ten days thereafter the article numbered eight or some other number, known as 'offenses against public morals and decency, or the public police and miscellaneous offenses,' is signed by the State's chief executive, who was perforce compelled to leave the quiet retreat and comforts of his sacred home life to accept the nomination for governor, and was afterwards triumphantly elected by a thoroughly intrenched railroad lobby, aided and assisted in their noble, glorious, and patriotic work by the Brewers' and Liquor Dealers' Association. Now, there's morality and rectitude for you, with the great seal of the State on it as fresh as roasted peanuts; there you are, law and law-makers, side by side, sinners and saints; a damn little of its kind will go a long, long way with me. John Hay told it about right in his Mississippi River steamboat-man, Jim Bledsoe:

'He weren't no saint; them engineers is pretty much all alike:
One wife in Natchez under the hill, and another one here in Pike.'

"The old meeting-house people back in homespun days, when they sang 'I'm glad salvation's free' so loud that one could hear them of a still night all over three counties, were no gladder than I am that everything and everybody has a defense; we'd be in one deil of a bad plight without it. Of course, there's a vast difference between them; lots of these old sporty False Steps have got Ananias and Peter beat a big block, lying and denying. Now, on the dead square, boys, I like my way the best—stand pat and justify; anybody can plead frailty, but just think a minute how bummy and hackneyed those old gags are by this time; Burns and Byron wore them sleek as a mole a hundred years ago, and I'll be Billy-banged if I'm going to make a clumsy attempt to veil my conduct behind their flimsy and cowardly excuses."

McGuire was comfortably seated in the office of the old Joplin Hotel, whose walls will some day be replaced by a superstructure, the grandeur and magnificence of which will only be equaled in the great metropolitan centers of the Atlantic seaboard, and maybe not there. This office had witnessed the star part of more mining deals and ventures than perhaps any other spot of like dimensions between the Great Father of Waters and the Golden Gate; there many a lapidescent heart had cunningly devised ways and means of landing on the credulous "tender-foot," and many a glad soul had made bee-lines to post office or telegraph office conveying to loved ones back East, up North, down South, or out West tidings of his lucky strike just made and the refusal of fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred thousand dollars spot cash for it, when a fortnight before he would have been tickled out of breath from skin to core at an offer of thirty cents' worth of Fido (Bologna sausage) and a railroad ticket home for the whole shooting-match—lock, stock, barrel,

and breech-pin. In this same office many a political intrigue had gendered and germinated; sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys, circuit judges, and even congressmen were made and unmade and then made again; political ambition would here warm up, sprout, and vegetate in the ambient atmosphere gently blown into the confiding ears of him who was in the "hands of his friends" or thought so till the convention was over and he learned that some new man, whose church or lodge friends outnumbered his, had slated him down and out; not without honor and some sop, for the same convention, with the sagacity, forethought, and expediency naturally incident to such heavily weighted intellectual bodies, had prepared a soft, easy, smooth, fertile, and primrosy place in which to plant him in the county committee for the ensuing two years, out of which growth his party ringmaster well knew would exude a healing balm, whose therapeutical effect had never failed to cure political "sore spots and tent-sulking" long before the arrival of Tuesday after the first Monday in November, when every cab, hack, phaeton, buggy, and brogan would be streaming their muslin banners, "Vote for So-and-so for so and so," "The people's choice is your choice," "Vote it straight as a yard of pump water," *et cætera ad infinitum*.

Perhaps the office furniture contributed more than anything else toward McGuire's reminiscential mood and infused within him an inescapable desire to re-migrate to the days of his young manhood, long before he had seen so many living pictures of the savage cruelty daily on exhibition at the very heart of our boasted civilization. The writing-desk, with its little old longitudinal mirror, spotted here and there and all over from the loss of its mercurial background; the local advertising placards above and running all along, showing the best, easiest, and quickest way to the great American life-saving stations, where were dispensed wines, liquors, cigars,

etc., day and night, or night and day, owing to when his Thirstyship struck the town.

The painless dentist, Dr. Peter Pullum, who extracted the aching grinders and molars and kept a glass jar full of them at the foot of his office stairs (except a very large center core, which was filled with brick-dust and shavings), had his picture prominently displayed thereon, his professional eyes peering through nose-glasses away up and out and above and far, far away, showing his intellectual superiority over all things in human form, past and present and to come.

The Jasper Depot, Hotel, Bus, Baggage, and Transfer Line, with a half-tone painting of their best turnout heavily laden with commercial salesmen, the most important civilizer in all the tide of travel then and now, their grips, sample-cases, trunks, trappings, and other belongings galore, also had a prominent place beside Solomon Einstein's Great Southwestern Clothing Emporium, with Sol and his whole force of salesmen in bold relief tommyhawking prices helter-skelter, leaving behind them a trail of supposititious, emaciated competitors *hors de combat*.

Nor were the walls wholly destitute of pictures or wanting in wall decorations, for above and behind the cigar-stand were suspended the *fac-simile* likenesses of many an accomplished, *chic*, little popular actress, whose shapely form and chromatic beauty were daily and hourly doing duty advertising this or that "best five cent cigar on earth," pursing up her sweet little lips and holding out a tubular roll of the seductive weed, bearing some long, unpronounceable Spanish name in honor of the old Madrid monarchy, whose people originated and first used the cigar. Thrice blessed be she, this winsome guardian of smokers' rights and their inalienable prerogatives; may she forever flourish in this good work, shaking her little sugary fist defiantly in the face of all sugarless legislators who have in mind

the old "blue law" theory, abridgment and restraint of personal liberties, who under the guise and garb of moral necessity are wont to enact violable sumptuary statutes that attempt to limit a limitless enjoyment, who through crass ignorance or criminal bigotry would prevent you, me, and all the rest of the dull public from sitting quietly under our own vines and fig-trees and taking many and many a loving pull, whiff, and puff at the most exhilarating pastime known to modern ingenuity. McGuire was now gazing at one of these pictures. He had just kindled the business end of another ten-center and had it going good; between the time of trying to blow one ring of smoke through another and the knocking off of the white ashen end, he kept right on with his philosophical observations; none went away, and when one came in, he took a seat as close to him as he could get. Very few questions had been asked him. the crowd seemed to fully realize that this was one of his days for sermonizing.

"Howdy, Chris?" he continued, as he shook hands with an old-timer, whom he had not met for a year or so. "I was just unreeling a little new dope from an old spool. It may be batology to you, Chris, but you're in on it same as the others. I take these eruptive spells every year or so, and I'm past due for one now. The temptation to criticise grows on a man bad as the booze habit; reckon it's because faults are sown thicker on the ground than merits, and they come up better or they are easier to find, one or both; at any rate, I run across more of them. They ought to be kept in the best show-window all the time. I used to be dead set against fault-finders; hated 'em like snakes. I'm coming out of that in late years; don't know, but, taking this little life of ours all 'round like a wedding-ring, I expect these old boys who dig up disapprobation and censure are about as beneficial to society at large as the sly bunco-dealer, who professes to be an overflowing and inexhaustible

fountain of clarified optimism, but who wouldn't credit a stranger for an oyster cracker or give distress a pleasant look. I've seen 'em; they preach optimism and practice behind the safety wall; they play to cinches.

“Ever since I let loose of my mother's apron-strings I've heard just oceans of this kind of babble: ‘If you can't say something good about a person, say nothing.’ Now that's the most abominable doctrine ever promulgated around this round earth, and he who adopts it as a part of his creed or code is a coward, crook, or capper, either one, the other two, or all three; he may be a bunco-steerer to boot, and possibly not know it, but most of them do; and the man who popularized that erroneous expression was nothing less than a public enemy—in fact, it requires a very strained construction of language to call him by so mild a term. Why, you can ask business men in this or 'most any other town, ‘What sort of a fellow is Johnny Smith, Billy Brown, or Jimmy Jones?’ and what is his reply? I say, what is it? Six times out of every half dozen, unless he's an avowed personal enemy, he'll say, ‘I don't know.’ Now, you all know he does know. Perhaps he's been well acquainted with Smith, Brown, or Jones for thirty years; maybe he knew his father and grandfather before him; in that case, he's not only a coward *et cætera*, but a blamed old falsifier. That word could be shortened a whole lot and still be telling. The world's business is done on credit, gentlemen, and if the big mercantile agencies were to always practice that ‘Say nothing but good about people,’ in less than twelve months the rogues would have everything in sight and a mortgage on next year's crops.

“The worst feature of these deceptory old foxes and their work is that they're paid for it; if they did it gratis, 'twouldn't show up so crooked in the footings. You never hear a preacher riding on a half-fare ticket denouncing transportation com-

panies from his pulpit, and few editors with 'annual passes' pour out their vengeful ire on the way railroads hold up the people. I never did. Maybe they have no ire to pour out, or it's like Hub Jones' coffee, so dang weak it won't run out of the cup. Some of these illuminated mornings we're going to come to where their 'pulpit and press' influence will fail to keep the legislatures from passing a law lowering railroad fare to two cents per mile or less, and then away goes Mr. Half Fare and Mrs. Annual; gone, gone to commingle with the 'dim dreams' of our happy childhood days. You'll see it, boys; it's coming, just watch. The people's right forefinger is on the trigger; they're going to pull hard sometime soon on the best and soundest cartridge out of the box, and then the fire-escape agents and their influential characters can inventory what their 'say nothing' doctrine purchased for them in the hungry markets of the world. The best name I can find for that in my dictionary is 'bribery'—the act of giving or receiving something of value for a performance that is known to be illegal or unjust."

CHAPTER XIX.

Craft never played fair with womanhood and never intends to. Cunning seldom fails to over-reach the female. The best, noblest, dearest, and most unselfish creature (the mother) among the inhabitants of this planet has been cheated and cheated, defrauded, and deceived so much, so often, and in such multitudinous ways that a fair and unprejudiced mind stands aghast at the new schemes of guile that are daily and hourly hatched from the same detestable old incubator that has lurked in the brain of man ever since deceitful practices were first resorted to; and has constituted the chief stock in trade, goods, wares, and merchandise on the shelves and in cold storage, not subject to pure food inspection laws, with a good big portion of our parasitical non-producers. So anxious are they for temporal power that clericalism has often hybridized its spirituality with Mammon, and, as may always be expected, the product of that union, bat-like, is neither bird nor beast, solid nor liquid, but a kind of a dopy coagulum that the modernists call "bunk." This the local preacher and pastor of the congregation of which Mrs. Long was a consistent member began to deal out in allopathic doses whenever favorable opportunity presented itself and quite frequently when it didn't. This same stall-fed meddler (and their name is legion) even made bold to inform Sister Long that her daughter was about to marry an open and avowed free-thinker, or, as he put it, "a dire enemy of the human family, a dangerous foe to civilization, a bald-faced adversary of civic righteousness, an unsaved, reckless, and risky citizen," and many other similar counts, all in one long indictment. One thing can always be said in Mr. Preacher's defense for any position that he may occupy (taking him as a type): he needs the money. If he

could block that wedding, it might keep his salary up or even get an increase. He didn't resort to blood, blackmail, and the trimmings like the police and private detectives so often do; he didn't have to.

After essaying to forestall Mrs. Long's consent to the marriage of her daughter (out of the ark of safety and the fold of the anointed), his next efforts were directed chiefly in sermonizing about those who neglected to "fear and worship"—meaning, of course, the bridegroom to be—from such texts as "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and so on; and the next Sunday he would pounce on the old serpent for beguiling Mrs. Adam into the participation of a Ben Davis. Poor old harmless, non-envenomed, pied-bellied blacksnake, the farmers' and gardeners' best friend; he kills more stump-tailed mice, field-mice, wood-mice, rats, moles, gophers, weasels, and other enemies of agriculture and horticulture in one summer than all the roving, licentious Tom-cats do in their proverbial nine lifetimes. And yet that one anathema, "Cursed above all cattle," etc., "Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life," pronounced against him away back yonder and by a non-resident ruler, has given him and his dear little ones the decided hot end of the poker ever since, and for what might be parenthetically asked and answered in the same breath—for telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—"Ye shall not surely die," etc., "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened [past tense], and ye shall be as gods, knowing good from evil."

He continued his repertoire for weeks and weeks; honest doubters, men who had turned hell's picture to the wall and forever quenched its pitiless flames from the inexhaustible reservoir of truth, and written on its back with indelible ink, "Wasn't, isn't, and couldn't be," they were excoriated hither and yon and excommunicated coming and going like the harm-

less old serpent above referred to; were arrested, tried, convicted, and executed without their day in court, without a single witness being called in their behalf, with no motion for a new trial or change of venue on account of the prejudice of the court, no appeal or writ of error in their behalf; he just went on as multitudes of his kind have been doing for centuries, condemning to outer darkness, to a never-ending future punishment, multiplied millions of inoffensive beings, for not closing up every inlet and outlet of reason by everyone who was blessed with brains and opening wide their cringing and cowardly faith in what somebody somewhere in the dim and distant past should have said to someone else, who was instructed to tell another, was a divine revelation, delivered to him in a dream; and bottomed, based, and buttressed on that same dream, that vain fancy, wild conceit, and unfounded suspicion, and the brainless construction making it an inconceivable jargon of ponderous and inexplicable machinery without balance-wheel or piston, throttle or brake, with no safety-notch or escape-valve, nothing but a fire-box and brimstone, sulphur and more brimstone, and a little old demon, Jack-the-ripper engineer, with very violent tendencies, horns and hoofs and coat of mail, trident, barbed tail, and other immense, cruel savage, ferocious, fierce, barbarous and hard-hearted accoutrements, designed to give much pain to body and mind, to torment, afflict, and vex. There is just one answer, and one only, to all this future punishment dope: the horse-laugh—long, huge, loud, hearty, immense. The occasion demands it, self-defense requires it, self-respect impels it. Victor Hugo says we all have one mother—the earth, and that claim of kindred has never been or never will be denied. With equal force it may be urged that we all have one absolute and complete defense to that musty old charge; that ere the hearse backs up and gets us we will be parboiling in a room or place of endless torture to

appease the wrath of some unknown foreigner. When anyone by hint, slight mention, or suggestion conveys or attempts to convey that monstrous and horrid thought of lost, lost or eternally damned, just give 'em the merry laugh and nothing else, not even a penny. Stick to your own berry-bush; there's no argument to be made against a man's three daily meals. He, they, and every one of them must defend their bread and butter. The innocent lamb tried that with the rapacious wolf in Æsop's day, and failed; and you, kind reader, are booked for losing if you try it. You cannot argue with a man against his board, clothing, lodging, and laundry bills, but you can quit giving them to him in exchange for hellish talk. Bide your time patiently; it's coming, as surely as water flows down hill. It's almost here now; hades doesn't use one-half as much fuel as purgatory did just a few years ago, and the time will soon come when the clergy will not mention either, no more than they now do infant damnation or witchcraft.

CHAPTER XX.

The luckiest mining companies ever organized generally evolve around some mountain camp-fire or beer-table, and often other resorts not so nice. A short time before the incidents hereinafter related had come to pass, Mace, "Joe-Joe," Bruce, and Ole were at *rendezvous* in the rear of a building on Main Street, the front elevation of which was placarded "O. F. C.," "McBrayer," "Bock," "That's All," and other slake-thirst emblems, and whose inside decorations were fat horses, fighting dogs, champion pug-ugly bipeds of the Queensbury ring and rules; now and then a *décolleté* photo of femininity pleading to the eye and understanding (if not the ears) of each booze-fighter in eloquent silence by the size of the small drink she was holding aloft, albeit an advertisement of some high-priced "extra dry" or rare tippie above the price of the common toppers, who fire and fall back and fire again to the bugle-call of the same old ten-cent red liquor.

The bunch had played seven-up for the drinks till they were goose-full, and every man felt that if he started prospecting, he'd strike pay stuff "big as a mule" at the grass roots. Much there is, as everyone well knows, in the trite saying, "A fool for luck," but far, far more in that other basic truth of creation, "Lucky as a drunken sailor"; and it looks as if as much good has inured to mankind from blind chance as from all the so-called mental deliberations, prudent considerations, weighing, searching, sifting, and sorting the world over. There you have it—just stone-blind luck. Many of the world's truly great and glorious events were never contrived, intended, or expected; Topsy-like, they just happened. Columbus was looking for a water-way to India, not America, when he tripped his toe against San Salvador; John A. Sutter, cutting a ditch

to run water on his mill-wheel in California, discovered the largest gold mines in history. He didn't need, want, look for, or expect gold; he was tired of making flour for his Mexican wife and half-breed children without using pestle and mortar.

"Big lead," "big zinc," "lucky strike" stories were rife at that time about Central City, a mining camp on the State line a few miles west of the city, and the four concluded to prospect thereabouts. The scheme was talked over and blocked out in the rough, as it were; before leaving the joint, the embryo company afterwards known as the Jack o' Spades started its existence. The next day Mace secured a ten-year lease on forty acres at ten per cent royalty to the land-owner, and in less than a week the Jack o' Spades was buying powder, picks, fuse, and drills, hiring men and boys, just as the old Chipmunk had done years and years ago. Most of this world's affairs have ever had the pendulum habit; sometimes the strokes are few, other times many. Despite the regulative "F" and "S" hand, the faithful old mundane spring continues to unwind itself, boosting the pendulum as far as it can till the impregnable force of gravity turns it back; not alone in mining, but almost all vocations are similarly affected by this same pendulum habit; so with human taste, hopes, conditions, aspirations, and desires—politics, education, religion, all. The same voters that made Iowa prohibition territory also made it a high-license State; the same pulpiteers that so sparsely settled the Elysian Fields of Glory with precious human souls will finally compel Satan to hang up a "No Admittance" sign over the main entrance to his heated domains and totally depopulate the torrid zones of that hot country, and send the happy shades in aëroplanes or on roller skates up to mansions in the skies.

Mace had been playing a long game of ill luck. His ventures in the Southern pineries had failed at every point; in Oklahoma, where money grew on trees for some people, it

wouldn't sprout for him in the most fertile valley; and now, when the whole business world looked like a conglomerated compound of creditors, collectors, and referees in bankruptcy, the Jack o' Spades came swaggering to the forefront as if to assert that the law of compensation was, is, and is to be eternal, inviolable, and just.

As soon as the net weekly output of the new zinc mine got close to the one-thousand-dollar mark and Mace's part was around two hundred and fifty dollars, he spent more time in camp just knocking around than he did at the mine; as was his wont, he seldom overlooked a time or place favorable to the purpose of stopping little leaks and saving by-products. The first summer in the life of the Jack o' Spades he raised enough vegetables on ten rods square of their lease for a dozen families, and introduced many horticultural novelties that will long be remembered in and about Central City; knowing that the mine-water would kill his garden plants, he made a condenser of old cast-away tin cans and other metallic rubbish at the mill, and converted the exhaust steam into pure rain-water for irrigating, which he always did by night, thus equalizing the temperature of the water with natural rain and also preventing soil-bake. He grew his potatoes in straw-filled rail pens, and kept some sweet potato vines all winter in his hot-house tent; by the middle of January they were in full purple bloom, resembling the morning glory. He hatched three pretty little Plymouth Rock chickens by wrapping the eggs in cotton batting and putting them in the warm nest with some baby Belgian hares, and the old mammy rabbit in time came to believe that she was their mother and raised them to full-grown poultry. When the rats got numerous about the mill, he fastened a small looking-glass on the back end of a wire trap, and caught them all in one day and night without any bait. He would say to the boys:

"Rats can see much better in the day than in the night time, but they are compelled to do their work while we sleep, hence they take their meals in darkness; but, left unmolested, they work in daytime; they're sociable little creatures, and dearly love the company of their fellow-rats; when one sees his image reflected in the mirror behind the trap, he hastens to make a call on his ratship, and generally stays longer than he intended.

"I have made a life-long study of animals and fowls, and am well on to many of their curves. My mother made me keep a neighbor's young geese out of our garden one spring when a small boy. It was an irksome all-day job, with little rest and no pay. I trained the pea blossoms a little above and behind crossed pea-sticks about eighteen inches from the ground; Mr. Gosling would jump up for the bloom. After a dozen or so had suicided in the angles, the imposingly inclined family kept the remainder of their geese at home.

"Nothing does me more good than to stop little leaks and save by-products that were formerly wasted. The world's attention will be turned to that some day soon, and then we won't have to go to Chile to see a Valparaiso (Valley of Paradise); we'll have one at every door. The wasted garbage of our cities would, if properly conserved, give every girl in this republic two music lessons a week until she would become a proficient player, and then bring enough money extra to manufacture several hundred thousand good pianos. How many billion hard strokes and strong pulls that would take off self-denying fathers and mothers who have to shake every pocket and stocking hard and often to give the young hopefuls their musical education, and if the rosebud beauties didn't want to learn music, that sum might be used to purchase books for free libraries; no city, town, or village would long depend on the

liberality of Mr. Millionbucks for such purposes. People have prayed loud and long, years and years, for permanent injunctions to stay wholesale and retail wastefulness, but I fear their petitions and supplications have got no farther than the dead-letter office."

CHAPTER XXI.

"It's no good building a fire under a balky horse; he'll only move up far enough to let you burn the wagon." Mace used these words trying to pacify the Jack o' Spades partners at the front end of what promised to be a lawsuit.

Good paying mines have always been a battle-field of disagreements. Strife will slip through the smallest conceivable fissure in the hardest rock. When miners get to making money good and fast, it takes able head-work to keep them away from lawyers and out of court-houses. This is a common delusion of mankind, and is stupidity rather than malevolence. A very thin curtain will blind the hope of the best diggings when the owners don't pull together; almost any old thing is a handy provocation for a long-drawn-out lawsuit. Mace was determined that, come what would, the biography of the Jack o' Spades should be an exception to the general rule of mining ventures, and at the slightest threat of an approaching smash-up he would use every dart in his pacifying quiver to stay the ravages of litigation; the militant balances would tremble and totter for days and weeks, but finally the beam would dip in favor of mutual concessions and peace; and the hungry lawyers fasted yet a little longer.

The rigor of the ensuing winter put all the zinc mines temporarily out of business. Christmas week the Jack o' Spades placarded their main office door with "Shut down until good weather or further orders," but the company's treasurer mailed a check for six dollars every Saturday night to each of their forty-odd laborers during the shut-down. A sample of philanthropy which hitherto has never been contagious, but whose active principles, germs, and microbes, should they ever become catching, would inure to the betterment of the human fam-

ily a million times more than all the schisms, isms, car-end harangues, stump speeches, and ante-election promises in a thousand years.

Sub-zero weather held down the boards longer than ever in the district's history; northern winds blew cutting blasts over hills and hollows, and the winter's death-list was greater by far than ever before. Pulmonic, tubercular, and hectic troubles thinned the ranks, and the unpitying machines of death ran regularly their wonted shifts day and night, heedless of station, rank, or grade, and many an old-timer was ushered by the mandate of Omnipotence over the dead-line of silence to the empty little storage of his memory into sweet oblivion. Mace had complained frequently to his callers of feeling badly, but none thought him seriously sick. He showed no signs of illness; the only token of indisposition was his disuse of tobacco. Strong reeds bend and break almost instnataneously. When sound and powerful superstructures give way, it is from mud-sill to rafters. Hale and robust constitutions succumb to maladies whose most malignant missiles fail utterly when leveled at the infirm and debilitated.

CHAPTER XXII.

When May's high temperature was running Arizona's canyon prospectors, Mohammed-like, to the north side of high mountains, McGuire contracted a deep-seated case of Missouri fever. He'd had it before, and well knew that about the only remedy and treatment yet discovered to which it would yield was a railroad ticket to the Mesopotamia of the Louisiana Purchase, and leaving sand-dunes, alkali-beds, chaparral, mesquite-bushes, and a half score-or more of *chic* señorettes—not the very, very best in Christendom perhaps, but about as good as it is possible to produce by lineal ancestral line from a Spanish buccaneer and a Pueblo Indian maiden of previous chaste character three hundred years down Time's zigzag course from the point of contact.

Arriving in the zinc metropolis, he sought his old friend, Bruce, before shave, shine, or hotel, not even taking time to remove from his hat-band the last conductor's blue destiny slip with two little lady feet punched through the same, having due regard for proportions and dimensions from garter-line to insole.

Bruce was sober for a rarity, a condition that he didn't prize highly on account of its infrequency. In the den above the shop where he had lodged upwards of twenty years, he related to McGuire a long list of happenings about the Chipmunkers and their organization, which was still intact. Mrs. Long and Quita had both 'phoned him the day before relative to their next annual banquet. A few members had left the district for the gold-fields of Idaho, Nevada, and elsewhere, but the shock for which none were braced was the death of Mace on the 13th day of February last past, in his tent on Esquire Moore's mining-land near Central City. The sad event cast a serious and sorrow-blighted gloom over the whole camp. His



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near-by neighbors, seeing no smoke from the trusty Franklin stove nor other signs of life, suspected some misfortune had befallen him, and on entering the tent beheld his cleanly shaven face and perfect form neatly dressed as if prepared for the journey in the frigid embrace of that condition which for want of a better name we mortals call "the sleep of eternity." The body rested on the right side, the unclosed eyes fixed as in profound study towards the still dimly burning lamp upon the little center-table; beside the light and leaning against some books were two photographs, one of a woman of perhaps thirty years, the other that of a little girl of six, and written in Mace's own hand on a fly-leaf torn from one of the books was the following:

"To all to whom this may come or concern:

"If necessary, Howe will tell the friends who bear me to the dreamless couch the story of my disappointed life-estate, or the part of it they should know, and this note will be his authority so to do.

"MELVIN MACE."

Bruce ransacked his rickety old desk in every part and place, and finally found the February 15th issue of *The Miners' Messmate*, giving an account of Mace's burial in Fairview Cemetery and some excerpts from Howe's remarks at the grave:

"Friends: I have been requested in writing to tell you somewhat of one whom we know so well and who has attracted us for years by his genius, affection, unselfishness, and philanthropy.

"We leave to-day in this field of tears the mortal remains of him who by his work and worth furnishes a pattern and copy for successful existence, far, far beyond and above the commonplace. A man of untold sorrow and undivulged grief, using his language, 'whose own scars he was willing to carry and conceal, happily knowing they would end with his last pulsation.' During his stay in these parts, it is my belief that he has contributed, to the limit of ability and in full measure,

to the common stock and betterment of his species, and made the best use of reason according to his light. Disappointed in youth, frustrated in manhood by an unsuccessful marital venture, which can never be foreseen with tolerable certainty, he has rounded out earth's pilgrimage with one main centralized desire—the contribution to our stock of useful things. And what more sacred and venerable cause could he have enlisted in than making this crude world a more fittingly prepared place in which to live?

* * * * *

“I am so grieved by the unexpected death of my friend that I prefer to postpone until some more suitable season to speak at length of the sad features in the history of his life which he from time to time has imparted to me and for which I am commissioned by this manuscript, to the authenticity of which all will bear witness who knew him.

“The most aged inhabit this sphere but a little day. It is not given to all men, nor a majority of them, to inscribe their names in granite or bronze high upon the enduring monuments of human achievements. We cannot all be major-generals or field marshals, conspicuous writers, wise diplomats, sagacious statesmen, or strategists. Diversification is one of Nature's inexorable decrees, and he who wields the pick, drill, shovel, dynamite, and fuse to bring from the secreted store of Nature her indispensable perquisites of the comforts of civilization deserves as much praise as the most illustrious and distinguished.

* * * * *

“In conclusion, I venture to predict that Mace's proverbs, practical truths, and inestimable utterances will long live and flourish; and, without undue bias, I candidly hope that we will each and all fully appreciate the valuable influences of his precepts. The human hive holds many drones; millions of men originate nothing nor improve on methods they found awaiting their advent, and are ushered off the stage of action without having ever planted a tree, dressed a stone, drained a bog, or shaped a sweet and sympathetic sentence to steal away life's depressing cares and nerve men to successful efforts.

* * * * *

"The volume is ended, the record is closed, the last thread broken. This is finality. Melvin Mace, courteous, sympathetic, dignified, has retired to rest according to the lawful and harmonious system of things that are, have been, and, for aught we know, will be, while the worlds of cosmos roll and Time's chilling and killing frosts continue to wreck and ruin the children of men and women."

A few other noteworthy incidents were scanned by McGuire in the paper, then he and Bruce drifted into a general *résumé* of local historical scraps—odds and ends, that often dovetail themselves together and fit up better when compared by close observers two, three, or five years from the date of their enactment. Bruce said he had a double-entry account of almost everything, and quite a bunch of the old-timers' names were on the red side of the ledger for amounts ranging from a dime up to a thousand cold cash dollars.

"Well, yes," he continued, "I have always given good advice, but seldom taken my own medicine; I've tried my dangdest to shake the crooks and grafters, but up to date my efforts have been a joke; they'll wake me up at the dead hour of midnight, wish me a happy Christmas and a hell of a New Year, then touch me for a hundred until to-morrow, which was never known to be on the schedule."

"What became of Van?"

"You mean Van Noggle?"

"Yes."

"Ah, that doveish little leg-puller! she left here with the preacher's family."

"What preacher?" asked McGuire.

"Why, that one in her breach-of-promise case against me, or was to be; he married her sister a dozen years ago in Illinois, long before any of the pack ever scented a dollar made in a zinc mine. After she sued me, he moved here and preached publicly and plugged privately for my money, but he failed to

connect. When the damage was ditched, they ducked for other fields. I've never seen her since, but hear that she's weaving a net in Texas for a cattleman. Oh! it's a tough job to suppress these old girls when they get money and man on the brain at once; they push and pull, but not for the sake of excitement or health—it's the hard-earned in the palm they're after.

"Oh, yes, Mack, I was about to overlook a bet. Mr. Preacher lost out as usual, for last October's ides witnessed one of the most beautiful weddings at the home of the bride's mother that has been seen in this district for years. Miss Quita was faultlessly attired and was given away by her uncle (her mother's brother), who, as I remember, was much in company with the family and had for months and months previous been investigating the habits, character, and moral status of the bridegroom to be. He it was who had intentionally taken his sister's business interests from the management of the firm of Howe & Tarver, perhaps to try out the junior member's affection for his winsome niece."

* * * * *

BETWEEN OURSELVES.

Individuals for a short time lament the loss of their fellow-creatures, but cities, towns, and villages rarely hang crepe on their corporate limits or send sorrowful and sympathetic resolutions to the family of the deceased. "Mourners go about the streets," but the streets never go about the mourners. All in all, this may be the best, for our little cup of grief can never hold the ocean of unshed tears the world's coöperation must of necessity contain. Besides, the interest on borrowed sorrow accumulates so rapidly that no legitimate investment can return profit enough to keep it down, much less pay the principal. It not infrequently happens that he who has fought the hardest on the picket-line and outposts of progress, whose commercial

activity and hard business sense has doubled the value of every piece of property in town, is the most superlatively despised man in the municipality. Public opinion is the most cruel, unrelenting, infernal tyrant that ever sat on a throne; its malicious Juggernaut, when well under way, cannot be side-tracked by the fairest peace-offering known to diplomacy; and this is another unaccountable feature of human nature; just why mankind have been so constructed, up to going to press, we don't lay any claim to knowing, and are still waiting for evidence. It may develop that we are a hoggish conglomeration that won't bear good treatment, and if this diagnosis is correct, the remedy may be somewhere between higher education and the fattening-pen, with the *pen* in italics.

* * * * *

Recapitulating the principal points of interest and local happenings, Bruce resumed his conversation with McGuire the following Sunday, after Mack had rested up, gotten his bearings, and was somewhat reconciled to the heavy atmosphere of the low altitude.

"I'm getting up in years—nearly three score and ten, and I feel it; aside from whisky-drinking, and that hasn't cost very much, I have been fairly good to myself. I have long since learned to drink alone. Now, since I have quit the small loan business, my property is in the very best condition, and has been paying large dividends and interest ever since I have had it. It has more than doubled since we sold the Chipmunk. I'll tell you in secrecy that I intend it shall go back to those who made it for me—or, rather, the ones who made it possible for me to make it, and to the children in this city. I have my last will and testament already made and properly witnessed, and if there be such a thing as an air-tight and water-proof will, mine certainly is, for I had nine physicians to witness my signature, and I think they have enough professional honor to

keep them from witnessing such an instrument made by a lunatic. I am not the father of any child, nor ever was, but out of an abundance of precaution, I have provided that should the Supreme Court of this State guess otherwise, then my trustees are directed to give said successful claimant thirteen dollars and a cheap, open-faced watch with the letters 'P. L. T.' (meaning 'perjurer, liar, and thief') printed on the dial.

"The disposition I make of my belongings may not please many grown-ups, but it certainly suits me and the kids. I am going to bequeath to every surviving employee of the Chipmunk five thousand dollars, and a like sum to the lineal heirs of such as may not be living at the time I kick the bucket, but nothing to collateral kindred. I don't dote very much on collateral relatives. Nine times out of ten, one owes more to strangers than to them; very few successful men are indebted to older brothers for boosts in early life; after the debt we owe our father and mother is paid, if it ever is, our account on the score of relationship is squared. There may be fortunate examples different from this general rule, but they are extremely uncommon, and when encountered can be attributed to nothing but pure luck.

"Now, Mack, after the Chipmunk people are remembered as I have said, which will take about two hundred thousand dollars, I intend to have my trustees invest the remainder of my estate in Government bonds and municipal bonds, the interest on which, after expenses are paid, I want expended on what I call 'confection day' or days, in the public schools. You will understand it better from the instrument itself. I will read you the seventh paragraph:

" 'I request and direct that said sum and amount of annual interest so remaining, after all expenses are fully paid, shall be invested in and expended for candies, confections, and sweetmeats of as pure and wholesome kinds as can be obtained;

that said confections shall be distributed, beginning on the first Friday in each December of each year, among the school-children in this city, each child to be given one avoirdupois pound of said confections, the distribution of which shall continue on each succeeding Friday till all sweetmeats and confections are issued. I direct and request that said distribution be made at the adjournment of the schools, and suggest that said gifts be known as "Bruce's confections."'

"Now, I fully realize that my will is certain to meet the disapproval of 'most everybody in these parts except the beneficiaries, and that alone adds force to my already sufficient reason for making it. I owe the grown-ups nothing (in fact, nobody owes them much). If I did to any great extent, I'd feel like repudiating the debt. A majority of all the grown people I've had business dealings with in life have either trimmed me or tried to. Getting something for nothing is a mighty fad in the business world, made up mostly of cold-blooded animals.

"A lot of timber-wolves have been trying to get me to change my will and leave a big chunk to some alphabetically named rescue home for fallen damsels; I suppose these old pirates would like to be trustees. There are lots of jokes floating around on the backwaters of Slumdom, but this female rescue business is Exhibit A, the biggest trump card in the pack. I was in one of our largest cities a few weeks ago, and a friend showed me a mammoth department store that contributes thousands of dollars every year to one of these rescue homes on the lake front, and yet the inordinately low wages paid by them to the poor, proud, silly, sweet-faced, gingerbreadish competitrix trips at least thirty dozen for every one rescued—yes, it does! Mack, I believe that whenever a merchant, hotel-keeper, or anybody else fails to pay wages sufficient to keep, properly board and clothe their hirelings, that

very day the law should force them into bankruptcy and out of business. Purify the fountain-head. Treat the cause. No one should be poisoned to test the efficacy of a newly discovered antidote. Everyone with the brains of a fishworm knows what eventually becomes of an underpaid woman in a city; ninety per cent go through the same door, and no rescue home ever did or ever will turn their erring steps and viperine lives back to paths of purity and away from bad mixtures; it's a thousand to nothing better that they and every one of them remain in virginal *status quo* than to dream along the line of a rescue proposition."

AFTER THE BATTLE.

A score of years have glided by since the late Mace and Ole dynamited the big spider and cashed his body and limbs in the hungry markets of the business world. Metallic substances from the Chipmunk have entered into the formation, erection, and construction of probably more enterprises of thrift and usefulness than from any other zinc mine yet discovered and developed. It is a thrilling source of delight to him who scribbles these lines in commemoration of those who worked so well to once more emphasize the importance of success with the stubborn things that confront all of us. There never was a search-warrant issued to hunt for a dreamer. *I am, thou art, he is*, is the gist of every grammar printed. A "has been" doesn't know how to act in a banking-house, much less change paper and ink into goodly wads of "long green"—yea, fine gold. The tenure of our American principles depends solely upon the comfortably fixed middle class; they do the doing—the real poor cannot, and the exorbitantly rich never did and will not. Sometimes they make attractive promises, but their real contributions are to self-aggrandizing libraries or institutions to perpetuate their names in the glowing spotlights of the future.

To our Chipmunk friends who are still on this side of the Great Divide we extend a hearty hand-shake clear back to the cuffs—no little, frigid, two-finger jerk—and again assure them that the strenuous conquest is nearly over. Bruce has provided you with enough to buy a good farm in the Ozarks, where you can raise everything from red apples and red Leghorn chickens to red-headed children, and when you get the five thousand, which is an absolute certainty, you had best heed the admonition of your well-wisher and procure the farm forthwith, for the day will soon be when the soil-owners of North America will be the lords of creation, living the longest, easiest, happiest, and most contented lives of all. And as to the other co-laborers, who are basking in the refulgent radiance of Lethean rest, we are comforted by the reflection that while they are precluded from participating in the comedies of the hour, they are also exempt from the tragical, leaving with them the benediction of Thomas Hall:

“A mighty cradle this world of ours,
That swings with the days and years,
With its sheets of snow and its pillows of flowers,
To the music of the spheres;
And it rocks the silent millions of dead
So softly they never move,
But sleep like children, and it is said
They dream a long dream of love.”

The End.

